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Toward a Mennonite Brethren Theology of Mission

HANS KASDORF

This essay is based on my dissertation entitled *A Century of Mennonite Brethren Mission Thinking, 1885-1984* (University of South Africa, 1986), with the major portion excerpted from the second volume. My objective here is to offer readers of *Mission Focus* a mere outline of Mennonite Brethren mission theology in process as I have gleaned it from the records. That means that Mennonite Brethren theology of mission has not yet arrived, and therefore has the potential of being a dynamic theology for some time to come. Three distinct stages can be discerned so far.

Implicit holistic theology

Besides their *Confession of Faith*, the Mennonite Brethren have no explicit theological formulations. But a theology does not need to be formalized to have value for faith, action, attitude, and relationship, particularly not during the early stages of a movement.

Historically, the Mennonite Brethren have been more concerned with the pragmatic than the reflective side of their acclaimed biblicism. Much like the early Anabaptists, they simply sought to flesh out biblical truths in terms of ethical principles in daily living and missional witness in the world; and, similar to Halle Pietism, they have focused on the experiential and active side of faith rather than the reflective. That has made theological formulations secondary. They would certainly agree with Philip Spener's somewhat un-Lutheran contention "that it is by no means enough to have knowledge of the Christian faith, for Christianity consists rather of practice" (Spener, 1977:95). For the Mennonite Brethren this simply meant obedience of faith.

We find virtually no theological statements in Mennonite Brethren mission records prior to the 1940s. What we do have are implicit references to convictions based on the Scriptures. I will cite three examples.

A letter from Elder Heinrich Voth

In a letter to the churches in 1898, Elder Heinrich Voth of Mountain Lake, Minnesota, expressed the congregation's concern to find missionaries for India. The local church set aside May 31, 1898, as a special day of prayer and study of the Word. Matthew 9:35-38 was the text for the day. Voth's comments on this text reflect a holistic concept of the masses as viewed by Jesus: a) they experienced misery and thus needed relief; b) they were harassed and helpless and therefore in need of attention; c) they were scattered and in danger of death, because they had no shepherd; d) they presented the challenge of a rich harvest; e) they revealed the shortage of harvesters; and f) all of this constituted a call to the church to pray out workers.

The impact of God's Word was so profound, wrote Voth, that "the church was gripped with a deep sense of compassion for the lost world, shedding many tears and praying intensely to the Lord of the harvest" (Voth, 1898:3). The answer came at once. Faith in the Word called for obedience to the Lord on behalf of the world.

The first missionary, N. N. Hiebert

Subsequent to the prayer meeting at Mountain Lake, N. N. Hiebert presented himself to the conference as its first missionary from America to India. Convinced that the Lord had called him to represent his church in order to fulfill a special task in the world, Hiebert made reference to Isaiah 61:1, saying:

> "*The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord*" (Luke 4:18-19, NKJV).

It is historically and theologically significant that both Voth and Hiebert interpreted the message of the gospel in holistic terms, dealing with spiritual and social needs of humankind. For all practical purposes these events can be viewed as a process of self-theologizing in early Mennonite Brethren mission experience.

An interview with A. E. Janzen

"Faith in the Word must be demonstrated by acts of love in the world," declared former mission executive A. E. Janzen of Hillsboro, Kansas, in a personal interview about early Mennonite Brethren theology of mission. Janzen pointed out that they always lived by the conviction that the Bible must be theologically believed, morally obeyed, and evangelistically proclaimed.

For one thing, the Word records the divine mandate spelled out in Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:45-49; John 20:19-23; and Acts 1:8. 'Those who have had a rebirth experience," said Janzen, "have no choice but to go and to tell; they are bound by a moral obligation to obey the mandate of the risen Lord to proclaim the living Word."

Furthermore, the Word undergirds the unchanging message.

Hans Kasdorf is Professor of World Mission at Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary, Fresno, California.

According to Janzen, the Mennonite Brethren have always believed in the uniqueness of Jesus Christ with regard to salvation.

Acts 4:12 and John 14:6 express for them that uniqueness in words which cannot be altered: "And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven given among men, by which we must be saved." Janzen added with conviction: "Jesus Christ is the way, the truth, and the life. Only through him can people be saved."

Moreover, the Word provides the principle method of mission, though not in absolute terms. While the mandate and the message are absolute and unalterable, noted Janzen, the method is relative and, therefore, subject to change. Yet there is an abiding biblical principle of wholeness which the Mennonite Brethren throughout their history have understood as consisting of "preaching, teaching, healing and helping."

Therefore, they have always preached for a verdict, aiming for conversion—be that in India, China, Africa, or Brazil. But they have also sought to plant churches and train converts to become evangelists, teachers, healers, and helpers. This shows that they have been sensitive to all needs—spiritual, material, physical, and cultural, noted Janzen. "Originally, the Brethren thought that they themselves were responsible to meet all prevailing needs. But after World War II, they made wholesome alterations in approach and methodology by facilitating nationals to become better farmers, evangelists, teachers, healers, and preachers. This is what they believed the Bible was teaching them to do."

The response of the Mennonite Brethren to the Word of God was simple, according to Janzen: obedience to its mandate and faith in its message. By obedience they moved from place to place to preach the gospel; by faith they believed that if the Word of God is preached, results are inevitable.

In 1943, H. W. Lohrenz developed an operational mission statement which became the official document of principles and policies in 1947 and may be considered the first attempt in the deliberate process of self-theologizing in mission (Kasdorf, 1986:602).

A salvationist theology

It is striking how much Mennonite Brethren have been in tune with theological currents in mission thinking at certain times of history. The salvationist theology is a case in point. "The heathen are lost" was the unanimous declaration of the classical understanding of mission. Thus an all-consuming passion for the salvation of souls was primary.

It was a time of greatest urgency and immediacy. Mennonite Brethren stood with other evangelicals under that compelling conviction. Therefore, the church prayed and called out workers who were simply thrust out into "heathen lands" to reach the lost for Christ. They needed no theology of mission because they were filled and moved by God's Spirit in mission.

> *It was as simple as the command of Jesus Christ, and as urgent as life and death for millions upon millions who are dying without Christ. Every second saw more souls slipping into a Christless eternity. No one had ever given them a chance. No one had ever told them that they could live forever—in Christ. And faced with a challenge as simple as that, the Christian church exploded into what has been called the "modern missionary movement." It could be almost described as a race against time and against the devil for the greatest of all prizes, the eternal salvation of the human soul* (Moffett, 1985:17).

These words by Samuel Moffett not only describe the classic missionary movement but also reflect accurately Mennonite Brethren mission theology prior to 1957 when a revolutionary document of the Yarrow (British Columbia) Conference reviewed the official *Position in Foreign Missions*, stating:

> *The extension of our mission program has continued to be largely of a spontaneous character without a careful study of fields, pattern of work tried in respective fields or an effort to establish a directive program and strategy for the missionaries who were sent out. The general philosophy of missions called for men and women who would go out "to bring the gospel to the millions who are lost" not requiring the acceptance of directives or established standards to follow. The spiritual motivation of an obedience to our Lord's command constituted practically the inclusive requirement for the task.*
>
> *The status of our missionary program up to this day corresponds to the above stated philosophy which is true in its motivation, sincere in its efforts and sacrificial in its devotion, consecrated in its support on the part of the constituencies. The major emphasis rested in the responsibility "we must win the lost for Christ"* (GCY, 1957:42).

This salvationist theology of winning souls for Christ has

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been the single most forceful motivating factor in Mennonite Brethren mission. "All other phases of the missionary endeavor," the conference declared in 1943, "are subordinated to this main purpose and shall only serve to further the salvation of souls among the heathen" (GCY, 1954:72). This was the time which the General Secretary of the Board of Foreign Missions referred to as "the missionary-centered gospel ministry" with the compelling urgency to "win the lost for Christ." Christ died for all. Therefore, "no missionary is ever exposed to the danger of bringing the gospel to people who are excluded from God's plan of salvation," said G. D. Huebert. "God does not want the sinner to perish, but that everyone repent and live (Ezek. 33:11; Jer. 26:3)" (Huebert, 1975:11).

The 1954 Convention in Hillsboro, Kansas, still reflected the same commitment and conviction. As chairman of the Board of Foreign Missions, P. R. Lange declared to the delegates in salvationist terms: "We are responsible for 7,000,000 souls in our fields. They are longing for the teacher and the preacher." Then he asked, "Are they waiting in vain? Will the blood of the dying heathen be on our hands?" (GCY, 1954:73)? A. E. Janzen, Executive Secretary-Treasurer, continued in a similar tone:

> *The chief criterion of successful mission work must remain that converts believe with all their heart that Jesus Christ is the Son of the living God, whom they have appropriated in faith as personal Savior and whose regenerative work has made them vessels for the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.*

Stressing that numbers matter to God, Janzen added: "During the past conference interim (1951-54) several thousand souls were saved on MB fields" (GCY, 1954:74).

There have been times when Mennonite Brethren focused mainly on the saviorhood of Jesus, as reflected in missionary reports at conferences and conventions. The death of Christ on the cross for salvation of souls was central. All material endeavors, emphasized the Executive Secretary-Treasurer at the convention in 1951, have only one aim: "To save souls and to build the church of Jesus Christ" (GCY, 1951:40).

While the salvationist theology is solid biblical bedrock, it is anchored in a theology of the cross rather than the resurrection; it is rooted more in Jesus as Savior than in Jesus as Lord. This emphasis reflects a biblical hermeneutic that arises from reading the great commission in a certain way, beginning with verse 19 rather than 18, of Matthew 28. The claim of the risen, exalted, and enthroned Lord who declared that to him had been given "all power in heaven and on earth" was largely overlooked.

In keeping with the missionary spirit of the time before World War II, the focus was on the words "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations," as Matthew has it, or "Go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature," as Mark puts it (cf. Matt. 28:19; Mark 16:15, KJV). The Mennonite Brethren frequently quoted Paul, who was determined to know nothing among the Gentiles except "Jesus Christ, and him crucified" (1 Cor. 2:2). Therefore, to "preach Christ crucified" (1 Cor. 1:23) became their principal burden in mission with the specific objective of bringing men and women of all ages to a personal conversion experience.

A kingdom theology

Although the salvationist theology rooted in the death of Christ has never been—and should not be—abandoned, the emphasis has shifted to the gospel of the kingdom. This kingdom theology has been largely shaped by historical forces and is most concisely expressed in five theological positions rooted in the Mennonite Brethren understanding of God and their concept of the church.

Historical context

The theological trends within the international missionary conferences since Edinburgh 1910, the worldwide changes effected by political conflicts and wars, and the shifting scenes in mission resulting from the defeat and retreat of colonial powers all have impacted Mennonite Brethren mission theology and philosophy in no small measure. The culmination seems to have come at the Yarrow Convention in 1957 (Kasdorf, 1986:611). The theological focus shifted from the missionary as soul winner to the church as disciple maker. The lordship of Christ was added to the centrality of the cross. Deeds of compassion which were heretofore simply considered as belonging to mission were now being defined in terms of special ministries to the whole person; they became foundational ingredients in the process of an emerging kingdom theology.

That is not to say, however, that the classic salvationist theology was replaced by a kingdom theology. The process was not that simple. But the theology of salvation was complemented by a theology of the kingdom, and thus became another layer on which other layers could be built. That is significant to bear in mind for Mennonite Brethren mission theology. Its foundations were never shaken as they were, for example, in mission thinking of mainline denominations represented in the International Missionary Council. Here the classical convictions and old urgencies were gradually being ignored, if not denied. "No one seemed sure of anything eternal anymore," notes Samuel Moffett, and the convicting challenge of lost souls changed in much of missionary thinking throughout the Western world. The Jerusalem Conference of 1928 put it this way: "Our fathers were impressed with horror that men should die without Christ. We are equally impressed with horror that they should live without Christ" (Moffett, 1985:17-18).

Not so for the Mennonite Brethren. At the time of the Jerusalem Conference they were firmly committed to a salvationist theology anchored in the cross of Christ. The change occurred at the Yarrow Convention in 1957 when the conference adopted a *Resolution and Statement on a New Approach in Foreign Mission.* The statement talks about "worldwide revolutionary changes of the postwar era" which have brought "severe testing upon the missionary accomplishment of the past and its program for the future." With the rejection of "all colonial imperialism" comes also a "principal rejection of the 'missionary-centered' gospel ministry" as a sign that the "station-centered mission program" has become obsolete (GCC, 1957:41-43).

The casual reader may perceive those statements as nothing more than a shift in strategy. But that misses the point. The entire document is more theological than functional in nature. Conference endorsement of the Yarrow resolution revolutionized Mennonite Brethren philosophy and theology in unprecedented ways. The shift in methodology was an inevitable result. The merger of the Board of Missions with the Board of General Welfare and Public Relations to form the Board of Missions and Services in 1966 can be cited as evidence, pointing in the direction of a kingdom theology that emerged from the 1957 resolution.

Theological statements

During the 1970s the new Board reviewed its mission principles and policies in light of the Scriptures, historical developments, contemporary context, and current theological language. The resulting document entitled *Principles and Policies of the Mennonite Brethren Board of Missions and Services* contains the denomination's most comprehensive theological statement extant, focusing on the kingdom of God as the goal of mission. Five statements should be underscored.

We are called to proclaim the gospel of the kingdom of God. Through proclamation men and women are called out of the kingdom of this world to become members of the kingdom of the Lord. What we note here is a shift in the goal of mission. Although the new birth and conversion are still considered as the condition to enter the kingdom of God, and although church planting is imperative for spiritual nurture and fellowship, neither constitutes the final goal of mission. The document states:

> *Our ultimate goal is found in the message that Jesus preached—the Good News that the kingdom of God has come (Luke 11:20, Matt. 4:23), that it is open to all who receive it, that it is within us who believe (Luke 17:20), and that it is coming (Acts 1:7). It is for this we are taught to pray (Matt. 6:10). It is God's total order, expressed in the individual, in society and in nature. It is Christlikeness universalized. The ultimate task of the church, therefore, is not to build itself, but to glorify God and to proclaim His kingdom on earth. There is no more worthy calling, no greater task. By comparison, all other tasks are narrow, limited and small* (Principles, 1977:7-8).

We take the incarnation as a model for communicating the message. This means taking the human side of Christ as seriously as the divine. God came in Christ who in turn "became fully human without relinquishing his divinity" (Phil. 2:5-8). The document puts it in quasi-ethnotheological language, saying:

> *To accept the human dimension implies that we must take seriously the sociocultural processes involved in communicating the gospel and building the church. It is to recognize the need to learn languages well, to identify with people, to allow for differences in the cultural symbols and forms they use to express the gospel, and to trust that the Holy Spirit leads Christians to understand and interpret the gospel in their own cultural settings. To take history seriously is to realize that we must view missions as a process of growth both in individuals and churches* (Principles, 1977:8-9).

We serve as chosen instruments to proclaim God's kingdom here and now. Theoretically the Mennonite Brethren view the church on the basis of the familyhood and priesthood of all believers, stressing the believers' church concept. Therefore, says the document:

> *We . . . recognize the right of individual believers and churches to seek under the guidance of the Holy Spirit to understand the Scriptures, and realize that this may lead to differences in the details of our interpretations. This recognition allows us to work with other believers, and to maintain fellowship with our daughter churches even though such differences arise. What holds us together is a deep commitment to search the Bible together, and to follow our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ* (Principles, 1977:9).

The Mennonite Brethren affirm that older churches and younger churches stand in equal relationship to Christ and are interdependent under his rule. Thus they seek to transcend prejudice, ethnocentrism, and nationalism, most frequently based on culture, race, and nationality.

We receive spiritual gifts for ministry in God's kingdom. Mennonite Brethren have historically not been strong on pneumatology. But during the past two decades or so there has been a charismatic renewal; they have come to see that the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38) as the *arrabon* or pledge for salvation (Eph. 1:14) is not only the producer of the "fruit of the Spirit" (Gal. 5:22-23); he is also seen as the equipper for ministry through the spiritual gifts (1 Cor. 12-14; Eph. 4:7-11; Rom. 12:5-8). The document's comment on spiritual gifts for kingdom ministries is noteworthy:

> *We take seriously the need to discern the gifts that God has given to our people, to recruit those whose gifts are particularly needed in cross-cultural ministries, to support the development and training of these gifts, and to place the people where their gifts may be most effectively used. Having done so, we entrust them with the ministry* (Principles, 1977:9-10).

We are calling forth leaders in his kingdom to be servants of the King. The emphasis on servanthood leadership is significant, as the document points out:

> *Our model of leadership at home and abroad is not taken from the world that stresses authority and manipulation, but from the example and teaching of Christ that emphasizes leadership through servanthood. This spirit should also characterize the relationship of the Board of Missions and Services and the North American Mennonite Brethren churches to the churches with which they work in the task of missions* (Principles, 1977:10).

Expanded interpretation

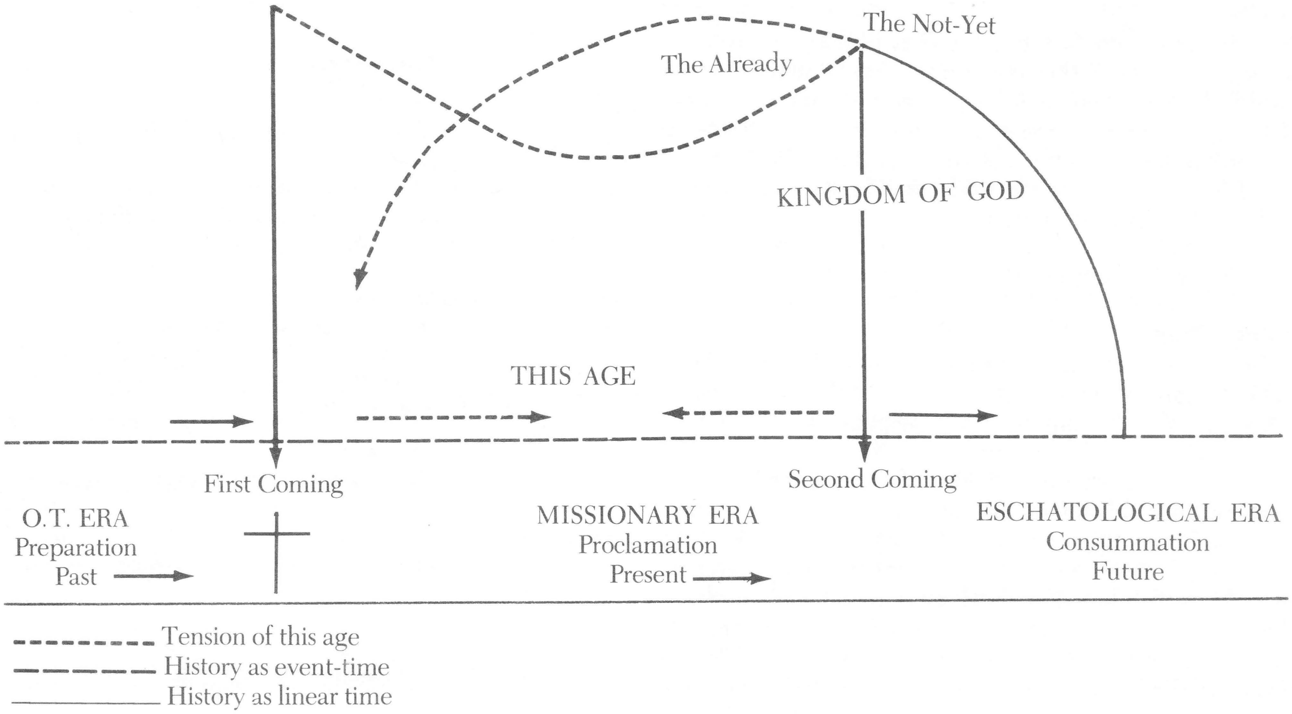
The kingdom of God, as understood here, is not merely a future event but also a present reality. God, in greatness and power, has broken into history from the outside for the redemption of sinful humankind. With the coming of Jesus the future has become present. Eschatological hope is partially being fulfilled. When Jesus appeared in Galilee, he was "preaching the gospel of God, and saying, 'the time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent, and believe in the gospel' " (Mark 1:14-15). In the person of Jesus, the kingdom of God is already "among you" or "within you" (Luke 17:21). He can do what no one else can: forgive sins on earth (Mark 2:10), and thereby meet the requirement for membership in God's eternal kingdom (Kasdorf, 1987:49-53).

The biblical view of the kingdom of God transcends three eras of salvation history: (a) the era of preparation delineated in the Old Testament; (b) the era of proclamation which is the "already," the present missionary era between the resurrection and the second coming of Jesus; and (c) the era of consummation, or the eschatological era which is the "not-yet" of the futrue kingdom (Kasdorf, 1984:31-33; see figure p. 5). The kingdom of God has come and is already here; the kingdom of God is coming because it is not yet consummated in the salvation historical plan of God. Therein lies the dialectical tension of history and the kingdom of God. "And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come" (Matt. 24:14).

Kingdom theology is Christologically anchored in the lordship of Christ which came into much sharper focus during the late 1950s and 1960s. J. B. Toews, for instance, maintains that a theology of mission "has its cornerstone in the glorified Christ," whereas H. W. Lohrenz, A. E. Janzen, and others emphasized the centrality of the crucified Christ. Toews explains this "new" position:

> *The missionary assignment of His redeemed church has its basis in the proclamation of Christ's lordship established through His life, death, resurrection and exaltation. "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world" (Matt. 28:19-20). Paul, the apostle, expresses the lord-*

Mission in the Context of Salvation History



ship of Christ in his petition for the church at Ephesus that the believers may know "what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all" (Eph. 1:19-23) (Toews, 1967: 2-3).

This relatively recent focus on the lordship of Christ must be seen in the broader context of General Conference activities, including the formation of the Board of Christian Literature in 1966, the establishment of a Historical Commission, and the founding of a Center for Mennonite Brethren Studies in 1969. These institutions have produced and disseminated literature that reflects the distinctive character of the Anabaptist/Mennonite Brethren legacy of the believers' church, highlighting the dimension of discipleship and the lordship of Jesus Christ in mission literature in general and in mission theology in particular.

That is not to suggest that either Mennonite Brethren mission thinkers and practitioners prior to Yarrow 1957 negated the lordship of Christ or that those after their revolutionary convention disregard the soteriological dimension in the cross and death of Christ. To do so would be a serious error. But the earlier records focus on the lordship of Christ more by implication, while the recent writings are more explicit in this regard. In kingdom theology the missionary not only calls people to accept Jesus as Savior; he or she also articulates in words and demonstrates by life what it means to follow him as Lord.

The Trinitarian theology

While the Mennonite Brethren have always adhered to the classical corpus of theological confessions, they have only in recent years made their Trinitarian orientation more explicit as a theology of mission.

The document entitled *Mennonite Brethren Missions in the 1980s* states:

> *God himself takes the initiative in world mission. It is first and foremost his task. God sent his Son to seek, to save and to serve, and in so doing became himself the first missioner. God sent because he loved; that love is still a liberating force. Jesus died that he might save; that event is still a historical fact* (Board of Missions/Services, 1985:1-3).

The first three theological themes of that document highlight the Trinitarian mission: the mission of God, the mandate of Christ, and the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

The focus is on sentness: "As you sent me into the world," said the Son to the Father, "I have sent them into the world" (John 17:18). After his resurrection, Jesus explicitly said to the disciples: "As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." Then he added, "Receive the Holy Spirit" (John 20:21-22). Here is a mystery in mission: God the sender is himself the sent one, and God the power is himself the empowerment. Early authentic missionary action, notes Wilbert Shenk correctly, derives from the mission of the Trinity (John 1:1-16; 3:16-18; 6:47-56; 17:18; 20:21-22) (Shenk, 1978:2). That mission is God's self-giving; it is God moving into the world, through the Son and in the Spirit.

There is, as it were, a divinely negotiating interaction within the Holy Trinity about sentness to the world; there is also a divine sending, the realistic activation of mission to the world. The Father sent the Son, the Father and the Son sent the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit empowers the church for its task of crossing frontiers toward the world. G. W. Peters has put it well.

> *The triune God in His very being as Spirit, light and love is an outgoing God, a missionary God, ever sending Himself in benevolent relations to mankind, ever searching in love to bestow Himself in blessings upon mankind, and ever spending Himself in great sacrifice to make man's salvation possible. Father, Son and Holy Spirit are cooperating and coor-*

dinating to bring man back from his sinful wandering and blundering, and restore man to his pristine state, purpose, destiny and glory. Our God is, indeed, the God of our salvation (Peters, 1984:81).

The Trinitarian approach to a theology of mission has three theological foci: The Father initiates mission because he loves the world; the Son ventures out in mission because he is sent; the Holy Spirit executes mission because he is the Spirit of wisdom and power. Thus the motive for mission is theologically anchored in God's love for the world, in Christ's obedience to the will of the Father to redeem the world, and in the empowerment of the Holy Spirit to witness in the world (cf. John 3:16-18; Phil. 2:5-8; Acts 1:6-8).

Ongoing witness

A few brief statements are appropriate to highlight what I have said. (1) The early Mennonite Brethren based their holistic mission theology of preaching, teaching, helping, and healing on the simple content of the Scriptures, and they demonstrated it by their effort of obedience in faith. (2) In the course of time they ground their salvationist theology in the love of God and the cross of Christ. (3) Upon revolutionary times in the world and in mission, they saw Christ as Lord and themselves as servants. Thus their kingdom theology is rooted in the lordship of Christ and in servanthood ministry. (4) Their Trinitarian approach is anchored in God's love for the world, in Christ's obedience to the Father, and in the Spirit's empowerment for mission. Herein lies their most comprehensive theology of mission. When love is activated by obedience, and when obedient action is empowered by the Spirit, then the servant missionary can cross frontiers and witness with confidence to the world—witness by character and attitude, by word and deed, by life and death.

But that is no final word on Mennonite Brethren mission theology. In my opinion, they have not yet outgrown the stage of self-theologizing. That is a positive sign and an indication that their mission theology is incomplete. The final product has not yet appeared. Hopefully, it will never become dogmatized and static, but will remain biblical and dynamic. The challenge to keep it thus lies with each generation.

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A Letter from the Third World: A Quest for a Common Renewal of the Church

ROGER DESIR

The situation of the churches in the so-called Third World countries is closely related to the vision and action of the churches of the so-called First and Second World countries. This is true not only historically and sociologically since most Third World churches are the results of the "missionary outreach," but chiefly because of the finality of Christ, the basic commitment of Christianity to what is termed as "catholicity," "ecumenism," or simply "universality." We have a common fate *as well as a* common faith. *Hence Christ is the truth for all or for none.*

The churches of the Third World have been called weak or irrelevant. But they cannot overcome this weakness or irrelevancy to the human situation they experience unless the churches of the First and Second Worlds are not only supportive of their actions (that by itself is a great blessing), but also feel bound with them in searching for the causes of these weaknesses and irrelevancies. Together the whole church must question the common plight in which they find themselves, and urge for a common renewal of the church in faithfulness to God's call.

The call to a new commitment that we in the Third World are hearing from God—to be a repentant church—is for the whole church, whether it be in the First, Second, Third, or Fourth World. The church of God in the First World must disassociate national interests and security of nations from the welfare of the church of God. *When Christian actions, however good and noble they might be, are motivated more in the name of an ideology—be it capitalism, communism, or socialism—then the church falls under the judgment of God for failing to reflect God's love as manifested in the cross of Christ.*

It is important for the church of God to read the signs of the time, to take a clear and open (unequivocal) stand for Christ as Lord, and to disassociate itself from any kind of human ideology, to disentangle itself from the obsolete yet still strong bounds of the net of Christendom. This is not easy for either one of us, yet it will be more difficult and costly, I think, for the First World churches. The assumptions are often made that: the church is "free, prosperous, and triumphant" in the First World, which is blessed by God; it is "captive and oppressed" in the Second World, where it suffers under non-Christian governments; and it is "minor and irresponsible" in the mission churches of the Third World, who are cursed by God because of their idolatries. Too many Christians of the Western nations have taken for granted such statements. How can we be, then, what we are called to be, the one and same church of Christ, whether of the First, or Second, or Third World?

The churches of the First World cannot go on living triumphantly with the illusions and false security of political freedom and economic prosperity. The Second World churches cannot go on fighting to free themselves from oppressive world powers with military arms and help from the First World, while the churches of the First World are being manipulated by the powers of this world. The Third World churches cannot go on living with the missionary complex of being dependent and minor members of the family, unable to shoulder their responsibilities because they are not given the chance to do so. All these are manifestations of the same sickness that affects the whole church, and it is only together as the church *that we will get beyond the dilemma and find the remedies. God is calling the church everywhere to renew its commitment to God's sovereignty and lordship.*

Under the moving of the Holy Spirit, we in the Third World are experiencing a "liberation" from the ethnocentrism of the Western church, but this liberation will edify the body of Christ in Haiti only when the First World churches are liberated from their own ethnocentrism and are willing to engage together in "uprooting Christendom." If we in the Third World are right, it will be for the whole church to say so with us. If not, we will be considered heretics wandering away from the path of truth. We need a definite and common action going beyond the tribalism of Christendom, to overrun the "faux pas of Constantine." One example is the coming "celebration" of the five hundredth anniversary of the "discovery" of the "new world" in 1992.

Here in Haiti, the church is struggling to discover God's will in order to be relevant in our time and to our people, and to promote a better society. If we are to denounce injustices and work toward uprooting conditions that cramp and frustrate life in our world, we desire the support, sympathy, and courageous solidarity of you, our brothers and sisters in the U.S. and other Western First World countries.

There has been much talk and writing about the killing, atrocity, and political chaos inherited from the past regime here in Haiti, but who can measure the immorality, depravity, and corruption of tourism, foreign aid, and economic dependency?

Together *we have to reassess our relation as a church to the world, society, and the state. If the church of the Third World should no longer identify with any political system, however sympathetic or friendly it be, then the First World churches should reassess the foreign policies and the economic strategies of their governments, all the more since they claim to do it in the name and for the safeguard of a "Christian civilization."* Together *we must articulate a "theology of poverty," for a proper stewardship of goods in the church.*

I know I am raising questions and issues that are not easy to solve. There may be more related to them than we should ever suspect. But I am convinced that they are not so much "Haitian problems" as they are "human problems," to which the whole church is called to address itself. It may be costly: this letter may fall into the hands of people who can hurt me, my family, and my people, directly or indirectly. But I feel compelled to write it, because I believe God is calling the church to repent of her past unfaithfulness, to humbly confess her sins to the world and, moved by the love of God, to take proper steps for renewal whatever the cost.

Christ is the truth for all of us, or for none of us.

In union of prayer and of service to God,

Roger Desir

The Reverend Roger Desir, a Haitian Episcopal minister, has been a close personal friend of many Mennonite workers and a valuable consultant to MCC in Haiti. His particular interests are in linguistics, translation projects, and facilitating ecumenical dialogue toward peace.

Tourism as Mission and Presence: A Serious Call to the Church

MILO D. STAHL

Destructive tourism, the bottom-line model

As a Mennonite Central Committee volunteer living in the heart of one of the world's tourist ghettos, North Shore Jamaica, I don't need scientific instrumentation to locate destructive tourism. The deterioration of the natural environment is most obvious. Secluded and well-foliaged beaches are giving way to hotels and villas and sand no longer shaded by trees.

Despite renewed efforts by government and environmentally concerned people, garbage-laden roadsides reveal themselves above the green of nature and the gray of man-made pavement. Both the foreigners' and nationals' lack of interest in maintaining a beautiful environment is evident. Throwaway fast-food paper and plastic seem to be a devilish show of status of one's ability to buy such stuff. A certain new breed of tourists need to flaunt their status by littering such colorful trash along the roadsides. Nationals who can will follow suit to show that Jamaica, too, is making it in the modern world, for they can now buy the popular brand throwaways.

Even worse than the environmental aspect is catering to the lowest common denominator of tourists' interests. In countries with strong survival instincts, the *bottom-line* mentality will do anything to make money, and therefore cannot resist the lowest common denominator among tourists. Added to this fact is a new kind of tourist—the working-class person—which gives additional reinforcement. Because of exchange rates in their favor combined with poverty within the country, these new tourists suddenly find themselves rich. For many this is a "heady experience" which "quickly becomes addictive" (O'Grady, 1982:18).

It is not surprising to note that this *bottom-line* mentality may have been exported. Dr. R. G. Lampart, writing in the Jamaican daily *Gleaner*, says:

> *"The business of America is business." So said Woodrow Wilson, a former President. But the business of business is the bottom line not only for individuals and companies but for nations also. It is a matter of production and cost, sales and profit. With many unfortunately the morals or ethics of methods used to arrive at a black bottom line are often suspect and in some cases downright dishonest. And the U.S.A. cannot hold its head high among nations of the world in this respect* (Lampart, 1987:8A).

The situation easily deteriorates from bad to worse. The national cannot resist the temptation to get money from the tourist. The tourist is grabbed in this "heady experience."

All one needs to do in Jamaica to get accosted for drugs is to stroll the beaches in colorful garb and/or shorts. Being a male in such attire will invite someone to ask you if you would like a "girl" for the night. For the female the invitation may come with a great deal more sophistication, but the results are the same, and tourists may find themselves giving large "donations for services rendered" for several days and nights. They may even pass on names and addresses to other tourists from their own town (Mikes, 1987:36).

Thus drugs and prostitution are reinforced from both sides. This trade could not continue if it were not wanted. And the nature of the *bottom-line* tourist economy model finds irresistible that which attracts money, despite growing health hazards.

Ubiquitous tourism

Tourists are surely a more mixed and complex lot than thus far suggested. Some, both Christian and non-Christian, may wince at this destruction of environment, health, and personhood. Some, of course, are too weak to fight and become part of the game. Others do find ways to get connected to cultural and personal enrichment. A few in the industry also profit from and seek to build and foster the beneficial and beautiful in the natural environment.

Tourism is a sociologically created phenomenon, just as are the city, education, and communications. It is important to note that at a particular time in history the church did choose to confront the city, education, and communications rather directly by using them as a major mission presence. My conviction is that the church needs to confront tourism just as directly.

The church's lack of confrontation, presence, and mission in tourism is not because of tourism's lack of importance in the world. Ron O'Grady says that "by 2000 A.D. it may well be the most important economic activity of the world" (O'Grady, 1982:vii).

In biblical times, traveling already had economic purposes. Palestine became the crossroads of East and West. The Hebrews had laws to make sure human relations in such transactions were just and caring.

Since that time communications and transportation have advanced, and tourism has continued to increase. Travelers are no longer mainly nomads, wanderers, or gypsies. They are now the rich, or at least those that can afford plane fares. They want to experience exotic pleasures in all kinds of societies. Host countries no longer need to concern themselves about the care of strangers, for tourists come prepared to pay. They demand services. And all kinds of *bottom-line* entrepreneurs vie for the opportunities to supply these demands. There is little Christian mission-mindedness to these efforts in third-world countries.

Each year we are told that new records in international tourism are set. In 1979 "there were no fewer than 30,778 people who set out every hour of every day to go overseas as tourists" (O'Grady, 1982:vii).

Tourism as a phenomenon is likely here to stay. Whether or not it will destroy the earth or help to save it may depend on how the church decides to become involved.

The new mission opportunity: staying home to be a missionary

Tourism as a phenomenon may well have the potential for making a new kind of missionary—one who stays home to be a presence and witness to those who come as visitors. Indeed this is already the challenge and opportunity of many Christians of the third world. It is an opportunity for them to share what they have learned of Christ with other traveling Christians or spiritually needy travelers of our one world. It requires a new maturity and stance in Christ to overcome barriers of current prejudices and culture as well as the vestiges of a seamy colonial history. The church can enter a new era of renewal.

We can acknowledge that the church has always been involved in a tangential way in travel and taking care of the

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Milo D. Stahl is Dean of Academic and Institutional Planning, Iona College, St. Ann, Jamaica.

traveler. The Holy Spirit said to the believers, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul, to do the work to which I have called them" (Acts 13:2, TEV). Paul, himself a traveler, met other travelers such as Priscilla, Aquila, and Apollos, and ministered to them.

The church has never set herself firmly in opposition to traveling or tourism. Indeed, many Mennonite entrepreneurs are supplying a host of services, from transportation and tour packages to accommodation and a variety of cultural and educational items. However, this has not usually been based in a third-world country, nor have profits remained there. This has received both greater and lesser blessings with a variety of control and support from the church.

These entrepreneurs have tried to make their efforts a form of witness and nurture but have not accomplished all they aimed for because of *bottom-line* profit requirements. Nevertheless, they may help the church begin to think more seriously about tourism as mission opportunity. Mennonite information centers would be precursors in supplying not only ethnic information, but becoming a more frontal ministry in tourism. But to do this may require some relearning, particularly in first- and second-world countries.

A mission and presence in tourism has several requirements: 1) that *bottom-line* profit does not become the criteria for involvement, 2) that ethnic and/or historic information services should not be considered the totality of this mission and presence in tourism, and 3) that profits accrued in third world countries must remain there.

There are two other important positive aspects of a full mission and presence in tourism. *Responsible tourism* is an effort by many church groups and related organizations to help tourists and tourist promoters become more sensitive, teachable, and respectful of the culture, country, environment, and people being visited. The emphasis is to learn from and become friends of the people being visited, refusing to exploit them in any way. The Center for Responsible Tourism, 2 Kensington Road, San Anselmo, CA 94960, U.S., represents these positive efforts. While these concerns are sharpened through dialogue with persons from host countries, the main efforts are by persons in tourist-sending countries and are directed at potential tourists and how they can improve tourism, particularly in third-world countries.

Alternative tourism is more general in its positive thrust and a bit more difficult to define adequately. While *alternative tourism* may receive some stimulus from the sending country and tourists themselves, it also infers adequate planning and preparations in the host country. This implies that *responsible tourism* represents more the positive efforts of the sending countries and *alternative tourism* represents more the positive efforts of the host countries.

Alternative tourism says that third-world countries have much more to offer than sand, drugs, and cheap sex. Individuals, groups, and business ventures in Jamaica have begun facilitating positive activities that are well suited and encouraged by the Jamaican environment and its riches. This includes efforts of such persons as former British High Commissioner John Drinkall, who returned to Jamaica to live. His product is "Off-Beach Jamaica." He assists visitors through tours and other arrangements to indulge in personal special interests such as birdwatching, dendrology, butterflies, flowers, history, painting, architecture, and photography (Morris, 1986:xii). Others include hiking, spelunking, railroad tours, geological study, cultural events including music, art, and drama, and some home visitation has begun. The base of *alternative tourism* "orginates from the indigenous culture and natural attractions of the host country" (Bently, 1987).

The church is involved to some extent in both of these positive approaches to tourism. It has been especially encouraged by the World Council of Churches' Ecumenical Coalition on Third World Tourism. But to become more frontally involved with tourism as mission and presence will require a new awareness of, and concern for, the individual tourist just as urban mission and education have focused on individuals' needs. Building and enlarging the kingdom becomes the primary concern in this venture. It will take a heart filled with the love of God. Many tourists do seek this kind of nurture, while for others such witness and presence may be probes that will touch them at the core of their beings.

Is the Christian church ready to support and encourage this needed presence and mission? This is a question that both the church in the third world and the tourist sending countries need to answer. Are we ready for a new era of mission in tourism in which the third world church will play the major role?

A modest proposal

As a Christian living in the tourist area of Jamaica, to me the challenge for the church is most obvious. The lack of such a witness is also obvious. A verse of a recent tourist's poem just two days in town went like this:

Went walking on the beach late Saturday night
four times in half an hour
was propositioned for female or male companionship
offered hash and begged for money.
(Kaethler, 1987)

Yet the church *is* here—at least ten congregational worship buildings within a square mile that touches the beach. And one of these congregations is Mennonite.

This is not to say that tourists are not made aware of Christ's presence or the embodiment of the gospel by individual Christians they may meet. There is even some knowledge of worship center locations—a chaplain on a U.S. military vessel was able to direct a sailor to the Mennonite meetinghouse.

But it is also clear that the churches have done little more than list their names, addresses, and times of services in hotels and other accommodation centers. The tourist must search to find the church, for the church has done little to contact the tourist.

There may be good reason for this state of affairs. To relate to tourists takes a lot of time and energy, and most Jamaican Christians have daily vocational commitments that are even more necessary to keep body and soul together than we know as a tourist-sending country. In addition, I have also seen in my short stay what O'Grady describes:

> *A good many Western aid and mission agencies are organizing church tours to third world countries to look at aid programmes, and the hospitality of the host communities is wearing thin. These people have their own work to do, and the presence of numerous visitors poking around, often asking elementary questions, is a distraction. It is ironical that some of the more successful aid projects in third world countries now find it necessary to employ extra staff simply to take care of foreign visitors* (O'Grady, 1982:60).

Yet it is still true that if mission in tourism is to be accomplished, the initiative for it can take place only through the host country. How, then, can this happen? First of all, it cannot happen unless the church sees the task as an opportunity. It also cannot happen in a third-world country of meager monetary resources without additional support. This may mean that the church should become directly involved in *alternative tourism.* The Christian presence will give it a different and more basic positive thrust. The Jamaican Christian history of hospitality to the stranger could be encouraged. And Mennonite models of hospitality could add some good weight. To be realistically possible, adequate remuneration will be required for the hosting.

Rootage in the host country is most important. Interest and enthusiasm for the task must start here, but the churches of tourist-sending countries may need to supply some needed funds to get the effort off the ground. It will also need to assist in "conscientizing" potential tourists about the need for tourism benefits to accrue in the host country rather than returning to the sending country. Additional benefits to society and environment will come when the host country begins to take responsibility for visitors and their potential activities, and when they receive proper payment for these labors of love. This does not imply returning to *bottom-line* profit-making but rather recognition that "the worker deserves his wages" (Luke 10:7b, NIV).

Knocking at the door of the Jamaica church is a mission in tourism that has promises for new life in the global church. We recently had the beginnings of such opportunity when three Mennonite women from the Mt. Vernon Mennonite Church in Grottoes, Virginia, visited here. They came on a "learning tour/mission awareness project" of their congregation, but there was responsible involvement of Christians here, which made it a mutual mission venture. It was indeed a valuable interchange with learnings on both sides. The women returned to Mt. Vernon with a new and enlarged meaning of the church. They now have sisters and brothers in the Jamaica Mennonite Church whom they will not forget. Probably the most obvious and reinforced learning was the need for hosts to take initiative in these encounters.

The appointment of a Jamaican coordinator-facilitator for mission in tourism in this country could well spark other tourism mission efforts around the globe. Such a coordinator-facilitator would need to be well informed of the scope and nature of modern tourism, especially as it operates in Jamaica. They would need to facilitate the development, interest, and enthusiasm of the church in this venture. Initially the interest and knowledgeability of the church would need to be ascertained and used to attain new levels of support and ministry. This would encourage additional vision and new involvements in this mission.

This should include the encouragement of the many local initiatives already mentioned, Iona College's and/or another Christian college's development of a tourism as mission curriculum, Christian home-stay options, supporting a variety of church calendar program activities, such as drama and musical events.

Such affirmation of life through Christian mission and presence in tourism would create wholesome personal renewal rather than only temporary or life-negating pleasure. Thus the mission in tourism could result in both adding persons to the church as well as bringing new health and wholeness to other Christian visitors.

The Spirit is calling us to faithfulness in the opportunities that are now ours. Let us encourage each other to accept this challenge that is almost inundating us.

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How My Understanding of Mission Has Developed

ALLE G. HOEKEMA

After my studies at the theological faculty of the University of Amsterdam and Mennonite Seminary, I took additional training at the Hendrik Kraemer Institute in Oegstgeest near Leiden. Following this training my family left the Netherlands to serve the Mennonite churches in Java, Indonesia, as teachers in their small seminary (AKWW) in Pati. My wife and I taught there for eight years. On our return to the Netherlands I became pastor of the Mennonite congregation at Alkmaar, until this past year when we moved to the Haarlem congregation. I have been a member of the Dutch Mennonite Mission Board, and currently serve as chairman of the European Mennonite Mission Board. The story of the development of my mission understanding will follow these steps of my life.

Theological studies

At the theological faculty in Amsterdam there was little place for missiological studies, although Dr. Golterman taught us much about interchurch relations and ecumenics. The Amsterdam faculty is better known for its biblical studies (Jewish-Christian) and social ethics. My additional training at Hendrik Kraemer Institute gave me a much needed orientation on the history and aim of missions. The ecumenical debate on moratorium and mutual assistance were important issues at that time. Also, the influence of Kraemer became clear to me, and I read with interest books by Roland Allen and Wilfred Cantwell Smith. At the same time, a number of international Mennonite

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Alle Hoekema is a Dutch Mennonite pastor of the Haarlem congregation, and chair of the European Mennonite Mission Board (EMEK).

contacts broadened my view. However, when we left for Indonesia we were motivated more by excitement of seeing other parts of the world and receiving a broader spiritual horizon than we were by a clear missionary insight or call.

Developments in teaching at AKWW Seminary

Teaching at the small seminary in Indonesia was a revelation. When we left the Netherlands, I had told friends in a daring mood that I planned to read Karl Barth's *Church Dogmatics* from cover to cover. I never did. His influence was insignificant in a continent where "religion" plays such a dominant role. The issues at stake in this young growing church were of a different order and did not show up in a (theo)logically ordered way. I realized also that Western philosophy has limited use in a culture with such a totally different system of wisdom.

We were confronted with the question of whether or not to teach Hebrew and Greek languages to our seminary students. It seemed a waste of time to do so, even though I found it exciting to note how many words and terms from the Hebrew had become common words in the Javanese and Malay languages through the influence of the Arab language. These confrontations taught me, step by step, to relativize what I had learned in my theological studies. They became to me the first signs of a missiological awareness: the gospel is the same, but our theological approaches and ways of education are different.

What the churches in Indonesia taught me

Our seminary was at that time owned by two Mennonite churches: the Javanese-speaking GITJ and the Indonesian-speaking GKMI. The history and present reality of these churches is quite different. In fact, the GKMI has a stronger missionary awareness, or at least is able to transform that awareness into organizational structures. The cultural and theological differences had to do with varying emphases of "ecumenicals" and "evangelicals," and the differing approaches of North Americans and Europeans.

Little by little I became aware that the Javanese culture, where the concept of harmony meant avoiding ethical conflicts and choices, forces the church to use only indirect missionary methods. It also makes it difficult to implement the solutions of the Radical Reformation, as for example, the peace witness issue. I was confronted with the question of the nature of the "true" church, and I realized that Westerners don't necessarily have the right solutions.

Another primary lesson for me is that young churches in so-called mission fields are no more perfect than older established churches. Young churches lack firm ecclesiastical structures, and tensions and uncertainties can occur once a church starts to grow. Sometimes these tensions affect personal relationships. Such situations taught me to use the history of our own Western churches with their many conflicts as a point of reference, and I realized that each missionary method calls for a great deal of humility. Under no circumstance should love—which is the starting point to a correct theological approach—toward those young churches be diminished by such conflicts. They reflect our own history, too!

Back in the Netherlands: the congregational level

Dutch Mennonite congregations are not used to the concept of evangelizing. For centuries they had to be the quiet ones (*de stillen in den lande*). One's religious choice, as one's political choice, is considered a personal matter. Fortunately, in the preambles to most of our congregational rules, the need to evangelize is clearly stated.

The church's place in European society is different from North America. European churches lost much influence after World War II. Governments took over responsibility for social needs, and individualism as a lifestyle grew rapidly. The emancipation (*Mundigkeit*) mentioned by Bonhoeffer keeps growing in many fields.

Working as a pastor in the Netherlands means working in a community under stress. Membership constantly decreases. For a pastor and his voluntary co-workers this means working at two levels: first, trying to keep the flock together, and second, looking for new ways to reach the world. The second area is even more difficult than the first. It seems that the world is not waiting for our message! This reality is very different from the world we met in Indonesia.

During my ten years as pastor I have noticed one trend. Those who ask to be baptized are generally between the ages of 30 and 70. The time is past in our Dutch churches when 18-year-old youth come and ask to be baptized. Many people hesitate to make the most important decisions of life before age 40, and are afraid to commit themselves. When they do make such decisions, it is a risky, purely individual matter. This, too, is rather different from the Indonesian scene.

The conference level

Some years ago Leo Laurense wrote a booklet, *Werven of Sterven* (recruit or expire). He confronted our congregations with a dim future if no appropriate steps were taken to evangelize and renew. The booklet was widely read and discussed in our congregations, a sign that members are becoming aware of the need for renewal and are looking for other congregational forms. Individual members are involved in efforts such as *Oude Zijds 100* in Amsterdam. What I have learned from these signs is this: our Christian identity, in a post-Christian culture, will return only if the sense of real community gets stronger. Real community is not identical with traditional congregations. In Indonesia the communal sense of the society itself is still strong, but how much longer? Here in Europe things are different.

The need for change has become clear to our mission board. We must find new ways to evangelize in our own neighborhoods. We do not know how yet. We were never taught how to evangelize, since mission was something to be done in (former) colonies, not at home. But we sense that a strong community style of life would fight against individualistic trends in society.

Another surprising matter is that more and more small groups of people are becoming interested in knowledge of the Bible—but not through traditional catechetical ways of education. In an emancipated way, they want to deepen their insights to become more spiritually mature together.

Open questions

I have learned many things both overseas and at home, and I am still trying to put the pieces together.

I have become a little critical of the function of state university theological faculties, although I can also see the dangers of church seminaries. The ultimate aim of a state faculty is to maintain scientific integrity, not to inspire and renew congregations.

I clearly feel the need for other forms of community besides our traditional congregations. What do we do with those congregations, with many members at the edge, and only a small number of persons in the center? I cannot judge the people at the edge who do not feel the need to join Sunday worship. But might it not be a sign to us to change our preaching and liturgical forms?

I have a question also about the precise role of the church as an institution in the mission of God. Many times that role is maximized, and aims are made to increase membership by a certain percent through the mission of church planting. I wonder what minimum role a church has to play in order to remain faithful to God, and how much space God claims for instruments outside the church. Asian theology seems to reckon with God's transforming power directly in society. Can we in the West replace institutional churches with small inspired communities only?

Finally, both in Indonesia and in the Netherlands I have learned how closely mission and pastoral care belong together. There was a time when proclaiming the gospel could be called a weapon against paganism. There was a time when mission could be defined as service amid underdevelopment and a means of struggling for God's justice. But now it includes pastoral care to persons who are anxious, lonesome, or lost, to help them see that they are creatures loved by God. Where no pastoral care is given, congregations fall apart. That has been clear in Europe as well as Indonesia, as researched by Tasdik, who visited new congregations in 1965 and again 15 years later.

Our simple, humble missionary approach in Europe should be rooted in pastoral care and in sharing together with people. We need to learn new ways of becoming acquainted with biblical truth and wisdom, in order to form a community of Christ that can end people's fears and anxieties. This conviction comes out of 20 years of wrestling with the meaning and mission of the church.

In review

The Church: God's Agent for Change. Edited by Bruce J. Nicholls. Capetown, South Africa: Paternoster Press, 1986, 285 pp., $10.95 (pb)

Reviewed by Harold Ens

This book grows out of the Wheaton '83 Conference on the Nature and Mission of the Church held at the Billy Graham Center and convened by the World Evangelical Fellowship. It makes available selections from the plenary Bible studies, the four plenary papers, and some of the papers and case studies given in the consultation on the Church in Its Local Setting, one of three consultations at the conference.

In his introduction, Bruce Nicholls points out the need for a biblical and incarnate theology of the church to undergird the enormous amount of activity by evangelicals in our world. He calls our attention to one of the major issues discussed at the conference, namely the relationship between church and kingdom of God and the parameters of both in the world. He says, "The Church is visible as the Kingdom community only insofar as it manifests Christ's reign over all its life and activity. The relationship is a dynamic one of judgment and saving grace" (p. 15).

The book is divided into eight sections which deal with the biblical/theological foundations of the local church, the nature of the local church as God's agent for change in individuals and societies, the relationship between the church and para-church agencies, and the witness of the church in times of suffering and renewal. Each section includes lectures and case studies by a variety of Christian leaders from around the world. Among the contributors are Theodore Williams, Peter Kuzmic, Luis Bush, Warren Webster, Tokunboh Adeyemo, and Jonathan Chao.

On the one hand the many contributors and different case studies tend to fragment the theme; on the other hand, the variety of approaches and settings for the case studies strengthen the thesis that God uses the local church to effect change, both in people and in structures of every cultural, political, and economic context.

The focus on the local church is a welcome corrective to the current emphasis on para-church ministries. The case studies contain helpful examples of the church as change agent. This book should be an encouragement to any church leader or missionary.

Harold Ens, former missionary in Panama, is Associate Secretary of Mennonite Brethren Missions/Services' Latin American/Portugal desk.

How to Beat Burnout. By Frank Minirth, Don Hawkins, Paul Meier, and Richard Flournoy. Chicago, Ill.: Moody Press, 1986, 151 pp., $5.95 (pb)

Reviewed by Irene Loewen

In this book the authors from the Minirth-Meier Clinic address the dilemma in which many Christians find themselves—a balance between trusting God and working hard in a responsible, dedicated way. Burnout is the condition that results when the usual stress of life requires more and more self-effort. Precisely because they are very committed, the victims of burnout experience physical, spiritual, emotional, and mental exhaustion.

The book is readable and clearly describes the warning signs of burnout. The authors use a variety of examples from all walks of life: missionaries, housewives, students, executives, and others. They articulate the personality traits and external pressures which contribute to the development of burnout.

This approach to burnout is helpful because the authors take seriously the biblical mandate to work for the Lord. They are able to address the burdens and unfulfilled expectations that Christians face, despite concerted efforts to reach their goals. Using Elijah's and Jesus' treatment of twelve tired men, the authors offer God's remedy for burnout. Practical, realistic solutions are presented, designed to begin the spiral upward movement toward healing and prevention after burnout. With Jeremiah as a model for hope, the direction is set toward soul restoration.

The book is well researched and offers additional resources in several areas. It is helpful for all Christians, but essential for those who are involved in work and service in a committed, active way.

Irene Loewen is Assistant Professor of Pastoral Counseling at Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary, Fresno, California.

Wide Was His Parish: An Autobiography. By Edward L. R. Elson. Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House, 1986, 208 pp., $12.95

Reviewed by Margaret Koontz

Wide Was His Parish gives the reader a window into the life of a prominent and successful Presbyterian pastor. Dr. E. L. R. Elson traces his story autobiographically from the formative experiences of his youth to the climax of his career—twelve years as chaplain to the U.S. Senate. His life includes such experiences as being a personal pastor to Dwight D. Eisenhower and chaplain with the military divisions that first entered Dachau. The book is filled with names and personalities—senators, generals, and presidents—and with Elson's reminiscences about them and the place he had in their lives and careers.

One is impressed by the scope of Elson's career and the gifts that enabled him to serve in areas of great power and influence. He includes prayers, letters, and conversations which focus on the impact that his particular high level of ministry had on those who were a part of his wide parish.

Perhaps this story should have been written by a loving but objective biographer. What the reader gets is a great deal of Elson and very little else. Is the purpose of such a life to reflect the glory and working of God or to announce the greatness and ability of the person? At the end of a chapter, one often misses what part God played in the events described. Elson acknowledges God's leading, but places such statements either as brief previews or as appendages to other long passages devoted solely to what he himself has done. This leaves the reader uneasy with the thrust of the book.

Margaret Koontz is a student in Church and Family Ministries at Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary, Fresno, California.

War: A Call to the Inner Land. By Eberhard Arnold. Mahwah, N.Y.: Paulist Press, 1987, 144 pp., $5.95 (pb)

Reviewed by John R. Burkholder

This small book commands attention first through the distinctive life and witness of its author, Eberhard Arnold (1883-1935). Founder of the Bruderhof communities, this revered spiritual leader here sets forth his understanding of human nature in response to the call of God.

The title is misleading. The German original was *Innenland: Der Krieg ein Aufruf zur Innerlichkeit*, translated as "Inner Land: The War, A Challenge to Inner Life." When Paulist Press decided to publish an excerpt from the larger work, somehow the focus was misplaced from *the land within* or *inner space* to *war* emblazoned on the cover.

But there is an important link between war and the life of the soul. Emmy Arnold in *Torches Together* says that Eberhard was admonished by friends in 1914 when writing his book. "Herr Doktor," they said, "we are at war. We have no time for inner life!"

Arnold's reply is in the book's thesis: the only answer to war is the radical renewal of the human heart. This is not another escapist piety, however, but a vigorous call to balance the necessary inward journey with demanding and prophetic outward action.

Both John Farina's *Preface* and Gordon Zahn's lengthy introduction to the text attempt to lead us back to the historical setting—Germany during World War I and then the rise of Nazi totalitarianism—that evoked the writing. Zahn, a Catholic pacifist and sociologist, pays tribute to Arnold's heroic pioneering in discipleship, but he recognizes that many contemporary readers will be put off by the vocabulary, style, and assumptions of the work.

Eberhard Arnold wrote with apocalyptic urgency and absolute assurance of the truth he was proclaiming. He does not play games with his readers nor offer shortcuts or compromises as he sets forth the rigorous demands of the kingdom of God. Yet although almost every page presents an unequivocal imperative, the call is clearly grounded in God's unlimited grace.

This is not a book for the babe in faith. The intensity of Arnold's witness, with its pervasive biblical allusions, may well make the reader uncomfortable. Extended analysis of heart, soul, and spirit is not our accustomed idiom. Perhaps the book will speak only to those who find themselves in the condition addressed in the last sentence of the book: "When the soul cries out for God, driven to do so by the distress of our time, it will be led to the goal—to the Church and to the Kingdom—if by the will it is lifted up to Jesus Christ and remains concentrated on Him alone."

John R. Burkholder, previously Professor of Religion at Goshen (Ind.) College, is currently a consultant with Mennonite Central Committee Peace Section.

Pedagogies for the Non-Poor. By Alice Frazer Evans, Robert A. Evans, and William Bean Kennedy. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1987, 286 pp., $16.95 (pb)

Reviewed by Mark Siemens

When I returned from five years in the Middle East, I felt an urgent need for missionaries to North America to tell stories of the effects of American and Canadian policies on the poor and disenfranchised.

This book responds to that need by providing detailed case studies for transformative education of the "non-poor." Its thesis is that through careful analysis linked with action to help the poor and oppressed, North Americans can change not only their perceptions and lifestyles, but also the situations of those who have suffered because of our affluence.

The origin of the volume was a 1982 dialogue among persons working on justice issues, initiated by Plowshares Institute. Central to the dialogue and book are the ideas of Paulo Freire, including an education model of dialogue and mutuality, and a strong commitment to act on one's insights to change the situation rather than simply accommodating to it.

Most of the book is case studies of transformative education projects on issues such as peacemaking, food policy advocacy, a woman's theological center, and transformative travel experiences. Each case study includes an overview, a detailed description, a resource list, and several commentaries by others working in that area.

Peace and justice organizers and educators will find the book informative, provocative, and energizing. It is probably too technical for use in adult Sunday school classes, but it would be very useful at the college or seminary level to expose students to a variety of possibilities for social ministry and advocacy.

Though the book is based on a biblically valid paradigm of just and whole relationships among people, it can be criticized for failing to emphasize that we need a right relationship with God through Jesus Christ. Its failure to represent the whole gospel should not preclude its use, however, as a valuable and comprehensive sourcebook on peace and justice education. We need to develop resources of this type with a believers' church perspective, also.

Mark Siemens is coordinator of the Fresno Mennonite Peace Center, California. Previously he spent seven years working with Mennonite agencies in the Middle East and Africa.

Apartheid: Tragedy in Black and White. By Gordon D. Aeschliman. Ventura, Calif.: Regal Books, 1986, 178 pp., $7.95 (pb)

Reviewed by Stanley Green

A whole plethora of books has emerged from South Africa in the past decade, addressing the challenge presented to the Christian church by apartheid. Aside from the recent *Evangelical Witness in South Africa*, a theological response by "concerned evangelicals," there is nothing else written by an evangelical Christian on the subject. Aeschliman's book, therefore, fills a gap.

For sixteen years Aeschliman saw the South Africa reality from one side—the white perspective. Recently, he returned to the country of his birth and had the courage to see it from the other side—a rare experience since, according to him, only 1 percent of white South Africans ever visit black areas. What he saw stirred in him the fires of passion, and the book reflects both the anguish and the ire of a prophet.

Aeschliman's purpose is not merely to inform his readers of the tragic consequence of a heinous system, glimpses of which are given in the book. The book has a missionary purpose. The integrity of the gospel is at stake in South Africa. Biblical Christians cannot remain silent, and the book is the vehicle for Aeschliman's challenge—especially to North American Christians—to defend the cause of Christ.

Aeschliman is particularly helpful in three ways: (a) he helps us understand the close kinship between the Afrikaner Church and the system; (b) he shows the emptiness of the claim that the real threat in the South African context is communism, linking to this the misguided perceptions of U.S. churchmen like Falwell; (c) he introduces us to key leaders in the church's struggle against apartheid and gives us glimpses of the courage and deep spiritual convictions which imbue Christians like Desmond Tutu, Allan Boesak, Nico Smith, and David Bosch, who are committed to a nonviolent solution to the present imbroglio.

The book does not offer solutions, which may be just as well. It presents a glaring picture of the South African tragedy where black Christians are oppressed by white Christians. This aberration is challenged by reference to the witness for justice and peace. Aeschliman does, however, suggest a possible direction for movement toward a more just peace by including in the appendix the Freedom Charter of the African National Congress. Aeschliman is not merely content to challenge evangelical Christians to take seriously their responsibility, he also invites action by listing and describing agencies working for justice in South Africa with which individuals and churches can become involved.

Apartheid: Tragedy in Black and White is a must for evangelical Christians who wish to understand the South African tragedy and who have the courage to hear words of prophetic challenge.

Stanley Green is pastor at Faith Mennonite Church, Downey, California, and a doctoral student at Fuller Theological Seminary.

***An Endless Line of Splendor: Revivals and Their Leaders from the Great Awakening to the Present*.** By Earl E. Cairns. Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House, 1986, 373 pp., $14.95.

Reviewed by Will Friesen

Earle E. Cairns, the noted evangelical church historian, has provided the Christian community with an important historical account of the revivals "from the Great Awakening to the present." Written in popular style, this book is for the most part a biographical sketch of some of the major revivalists the Christian church has known.

The first and largest section of the book is devoted to an overview of some leaders in revival and renewal movements. Candid accounts of persons like Jonathan Edwards, the Wesley brothers, Charles Finney, Dwight L. Moody, Billy Sunday, Charles Fuller, and Billy Graham are included. In part two, Cairns elucidates the results of revival by looking at major leaders and institutions who have impacted church growth and provided leadership in spiritual, ethical, and social reform. In the third section, Cairns reflects on the theology of revival movements. Special consideration is given to the hymnology of revival as a way of assessing the theological themes of revivalism. The last brief section outlines methodology, manifestations, and means of revival, where Cairns shows what techniques have been used in securing revival and renewal in the church.

A weakness of the book is its confusion between revival movements and mission. Early on in the book Cairns makes it clear that mission and evangelism are not synonymous with revival. Unfortunately, he strays from this notion by including missionizing movements in Asia and Africa as examples of revivals. Another weakness is his inability to provide a historical context for understanding how a particular revivalist fits into the larger religious and social climate of the day. For example, revivals of the early 1700s seem almost identical to the revival movements of the 1980s, even though history bears out that a number of different religious and social elements were present in each time period, allowing the Spirit to work in a particular way.

Although the book is marred by some methodological problems, *An Endless Line of Splendor* deserves to become a key resource for individuals and church groups studying the figures and strategists of revival in the church. A particularly helpful feature is an extended bibliography which lists older books of significant but little-known revivalists in both American and British church history.

Will Friesen is Assistant Professor of Biblical and Religious Studies at Fresno Pacific College, Fresno, California.

***Understanding Cults and New Religions*.** By Irving Hexham and Karla Poewe. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1986, 170 pp., $8.95 (pb)

Reviewed by Ernest Schmidt

For those of us interested in Christian missions, the authors' observation in the preface is crucial: "It is our belief that anyone wishing to talk to cult members needs to recognize that understanding must precede criticism." Consequently, any information that will facilitate this should be most welcome.

The authors share their understandings of cults and new religions, incorporating perspectives and insights derived from academic studies in anthropology, psychology, sociology, and religion. Various aspects treated in this somewhat comprehensive study are topics such as the changing modern perceptions of life and of the universe in general, the particular problems and needs faced by prospective converts, the nature of the emerging new cults and religions each claiming to have corresponding solutions, the conversion phenomenon, and the end result of reversion into the irrational and magical practices of the more distant past. The interesting data presented are obtained from firsthand field studies and from a review of literature.

This book could be very rewarding for insight and ministry for anyone interested in the academic interdisciplinary approach to this subject. It is a good supplement to more traditional treatment for anyone willing to give the matter serious study. Not all the concepts and methods of secularized disciplines should be accepted, nor is it necessary to agree with all of the authors' presuppositions and generalizations in order to benefit substantially.

The authors' thesis of why people join new religions and cults may be an impelling reason for serious introspection by traditional churches, institutions, and ministries. Why is it that people look elsewhere to satisfy the deeper yearnings of their souls?

Ernest Schmidt of Sanger, California, is president of Lifeline Ministries, an incorporated missionary organization.

***Megatruth: The Church in the Age of Information*.** By David McKenna. San Bernardino, Calif.: Here's Life Publishers, 1986, 210 pp., $12.95.

Reviewed by Loyal Martin

Megatruth is David McKenna's 1986 evangelical commentary on John Naisbitt's 1982 best seller, *Megatrends*.

McKenna's most valuable analysis comes in checking the church against Naisbitt's trends analysis. Trends move from the bottom up, fads from the top down. Bellwether states for secular trends are California, Florida, Washington, Colorado, and Connecticut, i.e., not the assumed seats of power in Washington, D.C., and New York. In the church, then, Wheaton, Nashville, or Dallas will probably not originate trends. The charismatic movement, spiritual formation, mainline evangelism, lay participation, political activism, and need for community did not start there. *Top-*

down issues such as inerrancy, church growth, and ecumenical organization have come from traditional places. Abortion, role of women, worship style shifts, and protest against nuclear arms are items to watch.

Living in a "parenthesis" (Naisbitt's label for the change of an era) calls for moral renewal because authority breaks down and self-interest rises. The measure of true spiritual renewal is social transformation. Following William McLoughin's five-stage model, McKenna tests whether we are currently in a spiritual awakening.

Stage 1—Individual Stress begins with troubled times. Our beginning of this cycle came in the 60s with Kennedy's assassination. *Stage 2—Cultural Disjuncture* came with the student anti-Vietnam riots. *Stage 3—Recovery* was labeled in the "born-again" movement of the 70s and spread through electronic media. *Stage 4—Time for Prophetic Voices* is upon us. He sees Charles Colson as an illustration. *Stage 5—Social Renewal* is still future in this cycle. It depends on the ability of the born-again movement "maturing into a spiritual cause for social justice." McKenna is pessimistic. The alternatives for the church are awakening or apostasy. 'Evangelical Christianity must be extricated from the secular mire that is sucking the life out of the church" (p. 45).

Parts two and three are less valuable. McKenna tells us how to handle information *overload* (sorting truth from error) and *mush* (right from wrong). We have the Holy Spirit. He analyzes the trend toward "hi-touch" in our relationships, calls for "hi-test" for our stewardship, and "hi-energy" for our organizations.

Naisbitt leaves us with a hope-filled shout: "My God, what a fantastic time to be alive!" McKenna says, "Maranatha, even so, come, Lord Jesus." In the midst of our parenthesis the church must "occupy till I come." He claims optimism in the conclusion but details pessimism in his analysis.

Loyal Martin, Fresno, California, is a minister in the Mennonite Brethren Pacific District.

The Church in the World: Opposition, Tension, or Transformation. By Robert E. Webber. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1986, 333 pp., $14.95.

Reviewed by John Unger

This book is an ambitious attempt to examine the issue of the church in the world from biblical, theological historical, and contemporary perspectives. While such a wide-ranging approach limits exploration of specific issues, it does give the reader an exceptional overview of the subject.

Webber begins with biblical exegesis and theological reflections. His basic premise is that Christ, victor over the powers of evil, confronts the powers of evil in the world through the church.

The second section examines and evaluates some classic positions taken by the church during successive periods of church history. It ends with a look at the impact of secularization and the rise of the social gospel.

Webber then outlines contemporary responses by a variety of religious groups to the "new demons" of secularism, scientism, nationalism and political ideologies, and economic utopianism. Here Webber sees a growing consensus among Catholics, Protestants, and evangelicals, namely, a focus on Christ as the center for understanding both the church and the world. It is in the incarnation (identification with, separation from, and transformation of the world) and lordship of Christ that the church finds a new dynamic model for relating to the world.

In addition to three appendices (condensed theological word studies), this book contains extensive notes, a topically arranged bibliography, and indexes of persons, subjects, and scriptural passages cited. These make it a natural point of departure for further study.

Webber's readable style and clear, concise presentation make this book accessible to leaders and church study groups alike. It deserves a wide readership.

John Unger, currently a student at Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary in Fresno, California, was formerly associate pastor of the Clearbrook Mennonite Brethren Church, Clearbrook, British Columbia.

Christianity in the People's Republic of China. By C. Thompson Brown. Atlanta, Ga.: John Knox Press, 1986, 248 pp., $9.95 (pb)

Reviewed by Ike Bergen

C. Thompson Brown was born and raised in China, and knows the country and its people. He traces the story of the Christian church in China from its early beginnings with the Nestorians in 635 until the present.

This is an account of a church that has been tested, cleansed, freed from denominationalism, and is now a dynamic force in its country. The author shows how the church maintained its vitality under different regimes and governments as well as in friendly or hostile environments.

Brown is concerned that Christians in the West respect the resolve of Chinese Christians to uphold the principles of self-government, self-support, and self-propagation. He feels that to some extent the church in China was too much a Western transplant. He cautions the West not to rush in now, for by doing so the church may be forced to revert to colonial status. Brown is not advocating noninvolvement by the West in mission or in the life of the church of China, but emphasizes that any participation must recognize that "the primary responsibility for the evangelization of any land certainly does rest with the Christian community in that land. This is certainly a valid principle of Christian mission elsewhere in the world. And both the pre-1949 history of Christianity in China and the present state of church-government relationships makes it even more applicable there" (p. 215).

The author gives fair representation and interpretation of facts and situations. His conclusions are clear and helpful for anyone wanting to understand China and the Christian church there better. Most important, his suggestion about mission and relating to the church of China needs to be taken seriously by the church in the West.

Ike Bergen, former President of Bethany Bible Institute and pastor of several congregations, is now Secretary for Church Ministries, Mennonite Brethren Missions/Services, Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Editorial

In his *Letter from the Third World,* Roger Desir asserts that some people consider "the churches of the Third World . . . weak or irrelevant." Desir makes two uncomfortable points. First, the churches of the first and third worlds are inextricably joined. If third-world churches are weak and irrelevant, they only mirror the weakness and irrelevance of the churches from which they "first learned of Christ." Second, the renewal and reformation of the third-world churches are bound up with renewal and reformation of first-world churches.

A cardinal principle and goal of missions methodology has been to work toward bringing into being an independent church. But the formulation of this goal was made to overcome another problem. The way Modern Missions were conducted invariably resulted in a church that was *dependent* on its missionary sponsors. A study of the New Testament as well as some other periods of church history suggests that this dialectic—action leading to dependence, reaction leading to independence—misses the mark. The apostle Paul went about his work in such a way as to create a sense of unity and interdependence within the body. His vision was that the *one* church take root in the many soils of the Mediterranean world and Europe.

Our weak and divided view of the church makes it doubly hard to imagine how we can make a collective response to the practical problems facing the church in the world today. Milo Stahl describes graphically the crippling and maiming effect of tourism in the Caribbean region. Many Christians participate unwittingly in this exploitative enterprise. We must now ask how Christian solidarity can be expressed in the face of this debilitating influence on the social, moral, and spiritual welfare of Caribbean peoples. As long as Christians in the North do not perceive themselves being linked to the fate of brothers and sisters in the Caribbean, they will not take the matter seriously.

We make little headway in our understanding if we conclude that the Pauline vision for interdependence is of a homogeneous entity, either in structure or ethos. The missionary approach patterned after Jesus Christ always represents a loving God reaching out to a particular people in their particular context.

Our outstanding example of this understanding is that of the brothers Cyril and Methodius, ninth-century Byzantine missionaries to the Slavs. Cyril and Methodius insisted on translating the Christian Scripture into the vernacular, despite the objections of Frankish missionaries. This insight stemmed directly from the Orthodox understanding of Pentecost and its relation to mission, and remained an important difference between Orthodox and Roman Catholic missions methodology. In addition, the Byzantine missions called local leaders into ministry and recognized that local congregations could manage their own affairs rather than being controlled and led from ecclesiastical headquarters.

Alle Hoekema provides another view out of his sojourn among Indonesian Christians. He testifies to the way his own mind and spirit have been enlightened by participating in Indonesian church life where an indigenous religiosity is a vehicle for Indonesian peoples to experience God's grace in Jesus Christ. Thus the local expression of the church is a special blend of those universals which mark the church—worship of God as revealed in Jesus Christ, a covenant sealed in baptism, and commemoration of life in Christ Jesus in the eucharist—and the ethno-cultural particularities that identify them with a special community and history.

But we must return to our initial point: it is not enough to recognize the special tension which must always characterize the local church, combining within itself the universal and the particular. Rather, each local expression of the church must be aware of its incompleteness. It is only a part of the body of Christ in the world. Paul said it simply: "If one member suffers, all suffer together." Typically, we read this as applying to individuals. Actually it applies with equal force to the church. Interdependence is for real.—Wilbert R. Shenk

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MISSION
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Missions and Development: Are We on Target?

FLOYD M. MAST

Mission organizations have been in the business of changing people for centuries. Missionaries participate in a wide range of activities to meet the varied needs of the communities in which they function as religious change agents. But change has a way of catching up—even with organizations that have struggled to change people. Over the years the declining interest in evangelism within some churches, the growing involvement by government and nongovernment agencies in the development needs of the third world, and the blossoming of the independence movement have resulted in a new context for mission. Independent nations look less favorably on missions, particularly those whose primary concern is soul-saving. Even some-third world church leaders have at times been suspicious of what could be viewed as spiritual imperialism. In this context, churches face the need to redefine their mission in the third world, particularly in relation to development.

Development—which means a broad range of activities including economic, social, and political changes—is concerned with enhancing the well-being of individuals and societies. There is lack of clarity on what is the appropriate role for the church in development, with varied religious perspectives and differing answers.

Having worked as a volunteer with Mennonite Central Committee in Africa, I have had an interest in the church's involvement in development. This interest was the basis for my dissertation research in a doctoral program at the University of Pittsburgh. In 1985 I carried out a study involving leaders of U.S. Protestant organizations (POs) with programs including development activities such as education, medical assistance, and agricultural aid. Of the more than 160 organizations originally included, nearly 100 responded to a mail survey designed to probe their religious beliefs, views concerning development issues, and the role of Christian organizations in development. In this article I report on findings from the study and share what I view as implications of some of these findings.

Involvement in development

Many POs are involved in some aspect of development, whether material aid, education, or agricultural assistance. The extent of their involvement varies widely, however. Among those participating in the survey more than one-half indicated that development is secondary to religious-oriented programs; less than 20 percent claimed development as the major focus of their organization.

Given the limited resources in personnel and funds, mission organizations need to justify their involvement in development. When asked to identify the purpose of their involvement in development, less than one-third selected one of two "evangelistic" purposes (providing opportunities to share the gospel, attacting people to the gospel). On the other hand, nearly two-thirds indicated one of two humanitarian purposes (responding to the command to love one's neighbor, assisting in bringing wholeness to people). Although participation in development is seen as a means to an end (evangelism) by some (none of the more liberal respondents indicated such a purpose), the majority appear to view their involvement as being an end in itself.

Are POs unique?

Private voluntary organizations tend to see themselves as having unique attributes or characteristics compared to government agencies. Christian organizations, perhaps more than other agencies, have a basis for their sense of uniqueness because of the theological base from which they operate. When asked to identify four attributes from a list of ten which best characterize their organizations compared to secular organizations, nearly one-half ranked Christian motivation for service as most important. Only about one-third included their long-term involvement with beneficiaries among the four identifying attributes. Links to third-world churches was also included by about one-third of those responding.

Given the potential for closer relationships with beneficiaries based on a sense of Christian brotherhood and shared religious values, it was somewhat surprising that no one ranked close relationships between staff and beneficiaries as the most important identifying attribute. In fact, it was included as one of four by less than 10 percent of those responding. While this does not indicate that such relationships do not exist, it raises the question whether these relationships have the priority they deserve.

Given the theological basis for involvement in missions, the biblical concern for justice, and the belief by respondents that there are attributes that distinguish POs from secular agencies, it would seem that there should be a unique role for POs in development. In fact, although three-fourths of those responding believe that their organization has a unique role in develop-

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Floyd and Muriel Mast served with Mennonite Central Committee in Kenya (1965-68) and Lesotho (1976-79). Floyd currently teaches at Greenwood Mennonite High School and a local community college in Greenwood, Delaware.

ment compared to secular agencies, no clearly identified role emerged from the responses. Many responses referred more to the nature of their involvement than to a functional role. Responses to related questions show agreement by respondents that POs should be involved in helping marginal peoples, in developing local institutions, and in attempting to influence U.S. public policy concerning poverty and oppression. However, these were not identified as their unique role for involvement in development. The majority agreed that Christian organizations contribute most to development when they confront sin/evil in society. However, analysis of other data leads to the conclusion that confronting sin/evil refers to individuals rather than to confronting political and economic systems.

One senses that the uniqueness of POs is seen not so much as a functional role but rather the basis for their involvement in development, their motivation for service, and their ability to carry on a holistic ministry. Respondents seemed to say "this is what we are" rather than "this is what we ought to be doing, given what we are."

Concern for justice

As mentioned before, the question of the quality of relationships between the "server" and the "served" is of more than passing interest when dealing with issues of justice, for it is in the context of relationships that one is perhaps most willing to sacrifice—to take risks on behalf of those who are oppressed. Dealing with issues of justice and equity requires risk-taking when confronting injustices carried out by persons in positions of power. Unfortunately, POs may be reluctant to confront an unjust "host" and may be more comfortable repairing the damage brought about by unjust systems as long as they are allowed to carry on their programs.

Respondents were asked for their opinions concerning issues of justice and their organizations' involvements in justice-related activities. About 45 percent of those responding agreed with the statement that Christian organizations should support victims of injustice even if it results in their expulsion from a host country. Close to 40 percent disagreed. When asked to indicate actions taken to assist victims of political injustice during the past year, the most frequent response was the provision of material aid. About one-third of those responding indicated that they had taken no action (mostly conservatives and fundamentalists). On the other hand, nearly 40 percent indicated that they have programs that address issues of human rights/justice.

Given the complex political realities of our world, dealing with issues of justice in an effective manner is clearly no easy task. Nearly three-fourths of those responding to the survey agreed with the statement that Christian organizations are ill-prepared to deal with political and economic issues in the third world. This was particularly true of respondents who were more conservative in their beliefs. Clearly practical involvement in material aid, education, and medical care along with concern for spiritual change is the safest, most doable response to situations of injustice. It is less clear that such a response is adequate.

Participation versus control

Participation by beneficiaries in the process of planning and administering projects and programs is generally recognized as a necessary component for successful implementation. The quality of relationships between agency personnel and beneficiaries is relevant to the role that beneficiaries have in planning and carrying out projects and programs. Links between mission agencies and third-world churches should facilitate the sharing and even the giving up of power. When asked about the role of indigenous persons in their projects, about one-third indicated that local people have final decision-making power. This raises the question of the need for strengthening relationships between U.S. and third-world churches in order for POs to feel freedom to move beyond mere sharing of responsibility for development programs to giving up of control.

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Power sharing at its best grows out of relationships, but it may also enhance and sustain such relationships. While power sharing can occur within the context of relationships of trust, it also contributes to feelings of trust. It is in the context of relationships that giving up of controls in exchange for mutually beneficial interaction can most effectively occur. Long-term relationships can provide opportunities for listening, learning, and mutual discipling based on shared Christian values. Such situations may replace "giving-receiving" with "sharing of expertise." Thus one may understand a cultural context and another technology. Together they can create programs which are appropriate to a given context, and which lead to changes in all who are involved. If either dominates, there may be an unwillingness to call for responsible behavior by all those involved in the process, resulting in programs of change that are less sustainable.

Religious beliefs and perspectives on development

A basic question underlying this research concerns the relationship between the religious beliefs of leaders on a conservative-liberal spectrum, their perspective concerning development issues, and the activities of POs. I already referred to conservative-liberal differences. In this section I will comment further on this point.

In the discussion above concerning participation it was noted that only one-third of the respondents thought that local persons should have final decision-making powers in projects carried out by their organizations. However, liberal and neoorthodox respondents were twice as likely as conservative respondents to indicate this was true in their organizations. Participation is not a value that stands in isolation but is rather part of the larger issue of justice, for it is as people gain control over decisions affecting their lives that justice becomes part of life.

One might argue that conservatives, with their strong view of biblical authority, should take very seriously the biblical calls for justice in choosing program alternatives. In fact, respondents who were more conservative indicated less involvement by their organizations in responding to victims of injustice than more liberal respondents. They were less likely to indicate that they have programs dealing with human rights and justice than more liberal respondents. They were also less likely to agree that Christian organizations should work to influence U.S. public policy related to issues of injustice in the third world.

Perhaps the ultimate test of one's concern for those who suffer is the willingness to become vulnerable in order to bring about change. More conservative respondents were less likely to agree that Christian organizations should support victims of injustice even if it results in their expulsion from a host country. About one-half of the respondents agreed with the statement that "it is necessary for persons in the developed nations to reduce their standard of living in order to bring about development in the third world." There was, however, a marked difference between responses of liberal and conservative respondents, with liberals being twice as likely to agree with the statement than conservatives.

Conservatives and fundamentalists were less likely than liberal and neoorthodox respondents to agree with statements suggesting political and economic systems as causes of poverty and more likely to agree that development will most likely occur through changing individuals rather than such systems. The data indicate that persons holding to conservative religious beliefs tend to be less "activist" in their positions concerning development issues. They are more likely to identify with an "incremental change" model of development rather than a model calling for basic changes, including more equitable distribution of resources and increased power for the poor and the oppressed. While the data indicate involvement by conservative groups in issues of justice and other social concerns, the patterns suggest a tendency to view their involvement in development as a "door opener." Perhaps involvement in efforts to bring about fundamental changes in society which lead to increased justice is viewed as a risky option, rather than part of the church's mission.

Implications: a point of view

Although missions are deeply involved in various types of development efforts, it is clear that their major involvement is in material-economic aid rather than in efforts to change the systems that create inequity and injustice. This seems to be particularly true of more conservative organizations. Further, there appears to be a lack of clarity concerning any unique role for the church in development. This may be linked to a lack of clarity concerning a theology of development.

Most respondents agreed with the statement, "It would be helpful if we had a more clearly defined biblical or theological basis for our involvement in development." This is perhaps suggestive of a need within the church community, and more specifically within mission organizations, for dialogue concerning issues of human development in relation to the total mission of the church and for the uncovering of a theology of development which could assist administrators and planners in their choices among alternative strategies, programs, and actions. Such a theology of development should provide direction in clarifying where the church can provide a unique touch in the maze of human development needs and perhaps prevent our doing what everyone else is doing—at a lower cost.

Numerous respondents to the survey, liberal and conservative alike, pointed to the gospel as the source of change which can lead to development. Perhaps POs need to reaffirm their role as change agents—calling for a fundamental realignment of allegiances, values, and human relationships at home and in the third world.

POs need to take time to ask several questions. How does our theology inform us as we search out what we can do that others are unable or unwilling to do? Will it in fact cause us 1) to feed the hungry—with more compassion than secular agencies; 2) to form relationships as we teach better agricultural methods; 3) to learn with and from those we wish to help; 4) to help the oppressed to organize themselves through nonviolent action so as to improve their bargaining position in relation to the systems that oppress them; 5) to call on governments, in the name of God, to do justice? Will such a theology of development require making ourselves vulnerable, willing to suffer along with our sisters and brothers as we work to bring communities closer to the kingdom model? Will it cause us to proclaim Jesus as Lord of life, as Lord of relationships? Will it allow or require us to shake off the dust and move on when communities reject the Lord and models of community that allow him to be Lord?

Finally, it is not clear that leaders in POs have assigned to relationships the priority that is appropriate, given their long-term links to third-world churches. It is not clear that POs have responded adequately to issues of justice in the third world. It is clear, however, that the church needs to know what it is doing in mission in order to achieve what it should in extending the kingdom.

The Development Challenge

JONATHAN BEACHY

Some years ago when we were returning to Paraguay for the third time, someone asked me what we did here. Without shame I answered, "Community development." If you asked me that question today, I don't know what my answer would be. It would depend, perhaps, on who you are, but my answer would not be "community development."

During the past fourteen years in Paraguay (first with Mennonite Board of Missions, and now with Mennonite Central Committee), I have become strongly convinced that a big barrier to understanding between people is the attitude that assumes knowledge, genetic historical insights, special cosmovision, or some other unique "gift" that qualifies one to help others.

Knowledge, of course, is something obtained through dedicated self-sacrifice and should therefore be considered important by the intended recipients.

Genetic historical insights are more subtle. They come from having at least two generations of Christians in the family or a remote ancestor who was a missionary. Even though one may never have crossed more than a state or provincial boundary personally, one is qualified to share these ancestrally gleaned insights.

Special cosmovision comes from having seen a lot of satellites—because one knows what they are, one can share widely and deeply about them with the target audience. This same theory applies to other unknowns as well.

Granted, these comments are made tongue-in-cheek. But unbelievably, I have met various well-intentioned missionaries over the years with these specific "gifts." They firmly believe that if only the *unenlightened* would listen and learn, they would be much better off.

What is the alternative? Is there a way to relate, to help, to move toward wholeness without these attitudes? I believe there is. I can share both joyful and painful discoveries about being a "missionary"—a term we vigorously protested when MBM first commissioned us in 1973. What I share is both a personal pilgrimage and a team pilgrimage within the Paraguayan Anglican Church.

The seeds for this personal and team pilgrimage were planted over twelve years ago by two very beautiful people, whom most of the Mennonite Church will never get to know. I refer to Albert and Lois Buckwalter, long-term missionaries with MBM in northern Argentina. Gently, quietly, they started us on the right path. Their lives and actions modeled what they taught. We listened and tried to make their words our own, but their model didn't fit the system we were assigned to twelve years ago.

The Anglican work in Paraguay is now ninety-nine years old. Any serious historical study of the work among indigenous people here is thoroughly enlightening, but the tenacious belief that "we know some things *they* didn't know back then (in 1903, 1927, 1942, or 1958) so it will work this time" entrapped us.

Parents with all the answers?

We started out on a compound that was more than seventy years old, and we asked few questions. The Indians who lived there gave us lots of strokes for being kindhearted, ready-to-help missionaries, and we played the role. Collectively, we staffed a school with over 150 children, saw 100 patients a day at the clinic, and provided a company store to "save" the people from ruthless profiteers who pounced upon the mission regularly. There was a village council, but they gave their rubber stamp of approval to whatever we thought was best for them.

After three years we took a year's leave. We were frustrated to the hilt, feeling sure that mission was more than being saviors with all the answers. We shared these reflections with the Mennonite Church in 1979 in an article I wrote for *Gospel Herald*.

In the article I reflected on people living on large ranches in the Chaco, many of which were owned by North American companies. These people lost half of their children to disease and malnutrition, while their parents herded beef cows for export to the U.S. I wrote:

> . . . *You must meet Maria, and her husband, Tomas. In spite of the intense suffering they have endured . . . their faces are radiant. To see and talk with Maria and Tomas makes me churn inside. In spite of a long hard day in the sun—Tomas as a cowboy and Maria cutting firewood, carrying water, and looking for food—they join dozens of others at the palm log church building to sing for hours.*
>
> *Later, they and the children listen attentively to a sermon by an uneducated pastor . . . "God is faithful, my brothers and sisters. We have suffered hunger and need, but we have enough. Those not in the church have tried to quiet us; they have told us they don't like our singing; but we know and love God and will continue to sing to him. Last week our brothers and sisters at Rio Azul were beaten during their worship service, but they sang on. And so will we. We will not lose heart; we will not fight back. God is our strength."*

"What is their secret? What have they learned?" I then proposed going back to their village.

> . . . *Why should I go back to Tomas and Maria? Am I selfish to want to sit and learn from them and their people? To want to learn more of their joy and to share it with you . . . somehow I think I'll need to sit and learn, hurt and cry, and rejoice and pray a lot with Tomas and Maria first, and then share that joy with . . . others.*

As I recall there was very little feedback to the article. Friends shared that they discussed it in small-group or Sunday school settings. But at a mission forum I posed the question of who would support me to go to listen and learn. Only one person volunteered.

Right motivation, wrong model

The mission team in Paraguay was in the process of change, and we hoped for new sensitivity to, and historical awareness of, the people. But the gap between our saying and doing soon showed that we were still learning.

In the early 1980s the Anglican Church bought several large

Jonathan and Ruth Beachy have served in Paraguay with Mennonite Board of Missions 1973-78, and with Mennonite Central Committee since 1980. This pilgrimage reflects fourteen-plus years of thought and experience regarding development and mission.

plots of land with foreign capital (including donations from European Mennonites) for settling the Southern Lenguas and related groups.

Based on highly successful models of an Anglican area in northwestern Argentina and of Mennonites in Paraguay, the project leaders and Indian leaders concurred that educating nomadic people as agriculturists was a way to increase self-esteem and independence. Concurrence by the Indian leaders was automatic, since abundant food for work was part of the promised package. The fact that the "apparent" leaders were not leaders at all totally escaped us.

Before we knew what had happened, *we* had become the great white *patrons*. The *patron* who mistreated and practically enslaved his Indian workers was replaced by the benevolent *patron* who smiled and said, "Come on, come on, let's go get that cotton planted. Just think what a great crop you'll have, and what all you will buy!" That same *patron* cared for the sick, encouraged teachers, and participated in worship services. No doubt about it, we were highly respected and loved!

The Lenguas had never been agriculturists, but we tried hard to help them understand the agricultural way. Pressure didn't always work, at least not after the second year. I experienced total shock when one of the chiefs, effectively controlling his anger, told me, "You never let us do what we want, you keep trying to tell us when, what, and how!" We reasoned that he was simply annoyed because the credit for hoeing his own cotton had just run out. But deep down we understood the truth of his words.

Fortunately, the great white *patron* and his family had guests just then who asked direct, uncomfortable questions. What was going on? What about actual Indian involvement? What about dependence? Once again the team began asking questions, and doubts spread. An increasing number of our team questioned our approach and our ready answers. Our confidence that the Western-Northern world had answers to the problems the Indians faced began to fade.

Over a year and a half ago the team met again to evaluate how the Indians were getting on with our efforts. Although the meeting was planned in advance, the unanimous response was quite unexpected. Rather than evaluating the Indians, it became clear that *we* needed the evaluation.

Our self-evaluation continues. We have become aware that most of our efforts to "develop" the Indians were started on a false premise. We are the ones who need to learn, who need to be "developed." We discovered Tim Lind's booklet *Biblical Obedience and Development*, written ten years ago, and are taking its viewpoint very seriously.

Lind clearly calls for missions, whatever their orientation, to offer choice to the people. He says:

> *Liberation is not biblical liberation if it leads or steers people directly to conformity to the world, to materialism, without posing a real choice. A program . . . that assumes the natural and expected, if not the only and desirable answer to the problems of oppression and poverty, is integration into the world of having, into the existing system . . . is (one that) deni(es) . . . the biblical view of hope for true change.*

As a team we read and reflected on Lind's writing, and came to see that even our most benign efforts were misdirected. For example, we had been attempting for some years to teach health promoters, who in turn would provide basic medical care at the village level. We thought we were doing it right, because, after all, we asked each village to choose their health promoter. Indian initiative, right? Wrong! Existing health systems had to be considered. Total foreignness of a young inexperienced health worker, albeit "chosen" by his or her village, made for failure.

Applying the Golden Rule

Flipping the coin and considering the reverse is a good way to understand the situation. Imagine that one morning on your way to work in Archbold, or Milford, or Markham, you notice several older men (or women) who are obviously not locals standing on the sidewalk.

Several days later when you visit your aging aunt in Sunrise Hills Retirement Center you see the same people talking with residents. You discover that they come on a regular basis. They call themselves Lengua Indians, and they are looking for people with healing powers who can learn to care for others within the community.

Over the next few months you hear more about these folks and their "apprentices," who now seem to live in all the area retirement centers. But what really surprises you are their methods and medicines, which don't conform to FDA, AMA, or ANA standards.

How long do you think they would function? Would they gain acceptance? Would the "elders of your tribe" permit it? Would you permit them to cure your Aunt Minnie or your granddaughter?

In all areas of our work, we became painfully aware that our ready assumptions and models didn't fit. Working out models that do fit is not easy. Some workers left, unable to cope with the changes. Our unredeemed ethnocentrism continues to be a growing point.

Learning to relinquish control

We came to see that we need to be responsible to the Indians for *all* our activities. Planting our ideas for them to carry on as their own was not being true to ourselves or to them. We realized that most of the *Indian Self-Help Industries* (carpentry, metal shop, shoe factory, bakery) functioned only because we managed them with non-Indian methods and directly oversaw everything that took place. In effect, we reinforced to the Indians that they needed a *patron* to look after them.

We saw that being *guardians* for over three thousand head of cattle *until such a time as the Indians can handle them* was the height of paternalism. Granted, until seven years ago they had no land on which to keep the cattle, but continued guardianship was out of the question for them and us.

What follows is a reflection on the events of the day that the cattle were divided. In a very real sense, this event summarizes our personal and team pilgrimage.

The reduced angle of the sun's glare and the dried-up pastures and gardens defied gusts of hot north wind that tried to convince everyone present that summer had arrived. Sure enough, twenty-four hours later the south wind, with its biting cold misty rain, won once more and drove all of us to huddle around small open fires, trying desperately but unsuccessfully to keep warm.

(Well, that's almost true. A few of us stayed warm in our houses with four solid walls, our numerous articles of clothing and supply of blankets to pile on top of our soft beds.)

The time had come for the *reparticion*—the dividing of the cattle—which had always belonged to *la Mision*. *La Mision* in this case was the Anglican Church of Paraguay, which held the cattle in trust, hoping the income provided could work for the common good. As long as anyone could remember, the decisions about selling, herd improvement, and investing of the cattle had been in the hands of *la Mision*.

As a team of mission workers, however, we needed to divest ourselves of ownership, control, direction, and being parents. We are learning to share, to accompany, to be siblings of the Lenguas, or *Enlhit (the people)*, as they call themselves. Because the earlier decision to hold the cattle in trust was not made with the involvement of the Lenguas, we supported their desire to share out the cattle among themselves.

How would they handle private ownership of cattle? Would the animals be divided fairly (according to our standards, of course)? Would there be fights, uncontrollable anger? Would the hunger that stalked many of *the people* result in mass slaughter of the animals?

The meeting began. Felix, one of three senior pastors, gave his words:

> *My sisters and brothers, we have been poor for a long time; we have known need and hunger. We are talking about having cows, about owning property. Many of us have never owned property. Now we must be careful. We must not allow things to separate us. We must not allow things to come between us and God. Our walking with each other must not be spoiled by things. . . . May God make our insides strong to do what he wants. That is all my words.*

The first leader rose and moved to the middle of the crowd to share his words:

> *My sisters and brothers, we gave our word earlier. Our word has not changed. We must divide the animals equally; each colony must receive the same number. Our word is as before.*

"Yes, so be it. Let it be so," said some of the people. But another said:

> *My brothers and sisters, our colonies are not of equal size. There are twelve villages in one, eight in another, four in another, and only one in the fourth. How can we divide the animals equally between the colonies? No! We must seek another way. Is that not so?*

And the debate began and continued for the next six hours, with only short breaks for *terere* (Paraguayan tea) and a bit of food.

At times a speaker raised his voice; quietly, without speaking, another person moved to his side, and the voice lost its edge. Frequently during the long day people were reminded to "not become swollen" (angry). Later, leading women stood beside their sons (parents themselves), to quietly, without words, bring calmness to their speaking.

As the sun was about to set, David, leader of one of the larger clans, asked the question, "Are we all in agreement?" "Yes," came the response. "Do we all love each other?" "Yes." "Are there any other words?" "No."

And the meeting ended. Equity, by *the people's* standard, had been agreed upon.

Neither mass slaughter, nor fistfights, nor shouting, nor name-calling, nor holding back of opinions—however strong—marred the day. In the end, love and caring for each other prevailed. Why? For *the people* to bad-mouth, to express uncontrolled anger, is one of the greatest sins one may commit. God was asked to be part of the discussions, and he was, and they listened.

About 3000 head of cattle were divided equally by colonies among approximately 1000 families, taking into account different economic options in different colonies—e.g., amount of land available for agriculture, distance from paved roads, and the use of tractors as a benefit. Equality by *our* standards was not met, but we weren't asked, and we did not intervene.

Relationships with people are primary

Various lessons came from this event and the context in which it took place. Some are more obvious than others. The *need* of many missionaries to have the right answers, to be in control of *less developed* peoples, calls for hard questions about attitudes concerning development, and *who* needs developing.

The destructive power of mammon and the warnings given by the pastor need to be heard. Discernment as modeled by *the people* may be useful for our congregations. Seeing relationships between people as a priority in life is a lesson we all need to learn.

As MCCers seconded to the Anglican Church of Paraguay, we have the privilege of accompanying *the people*; not primarily to save souls, or to give injections, or to make students literate, but rather to walk with *the people*—through speaking their language, assisting in providing the good news in their language, and in discovering together what it means to be *God's people*. So be it; let it be so.

MISSION FOCUS PAMPHLETS

Calvin E. Shenk. *A Relevant Theology of Presence*, 1983, $1.50, 39 pp.

A synthesis of five papers presented at a meeting of the Council of International Ministries examining the origins of the concept of "presence," its theological basis, the debate about a theology of presence, and the relevance of the concept in the varied political context of today's world.

Wilbert R. Shenk. *God's New Economy: Interdependence and Mission*, 1988, $2.50, 69 pp.

Summary of historical, biblical, and missiological basis for partnership and interdependence with reference to several study conferences and consultations sponsored by Mennonite agencies on this theme. The official statements from these meetings are included as appendices.

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A Review Article

Doing Justice in a Divided World

Comfortable Compassion? Poverty, Power and the Church. By Charles Elliott. Mahwah, N.J.: Paulist Press, 1987

The Rich and the Poor: A Christian Perspective on Global Economics. By Carl Kreider. Scottdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1987

Reviewed by Harold F. Miller

There is a growing awareness of the profound division in our world between the relatively rich, industrialized nations of the "north" and the largely agrarian, impoverished nations of the "south," also referred to less acceptably as the third world. Literature on the subject is abundant. This brief review focuses on two recent books, both of which purport to examine the issues at hand from a Christian perspective. As subsequent comments will indicate, the authors share some common perspectives while they are vastly divided on others. First a comment on their commonalities.

Both authors are Christian in their faith commitments. Both are economists and have formally taught economics. Kreider is an American Mennonite who has spent his professional life teaching at a church college. Elliott has taught economics in a university, but he has also delved deeply into theology, having given some of his professional life to the ecumenical movement. He is British and a member of the Anglican Church.

Both Kreider and Elliott find unacceptable the specter of a world divided between rich and poor. They agree that Christians have a duty to wrestle with the issues, but they work from divergent assumptions. Predictably their analyses and their prescriptions take separate paths.

From the outset Kreider makes it clear that he depends for his basic data about the global reality on figures provided by the World Bank. With some notable caveats, he believes, as does the World Bank, that poverty can be remedied by increased production in both rich and poor countries. His assumptions are vulnerable to critique from the "southern" experience. In practice, increased production in the "south" has indeed taken place, but it has usually called for a shift from subsistence food production to the production of cash or commodity crop production. For the "north," increased production has involved both industrial products and agricultural products, some of them destined for and competing with "southern" markets.

Reduced to its most negative form (not true in all cases), commodity production in the "south" has required access to the most fertile land, the adjudication and entitling of land, land as collateral toward loans to pay for increased inputs, fluctuation of commodity crop prices, bankruptcy, land loss, migration to exploding cities, and latterly, an unacceptable debt load.

Confirming this pattern, Elliott cites the critique of the "structuralist"—a group of prominent "southern" economists. "The structures of international trading arrangements ensure that wealth is extracted from the developing country commodity producers and passed to the rich industrialized countries" (p. 55). Taking the point just a step further, Susan George in her book *A Fate Worse Than Debt* quotes an in-house World Bank historian: "World (commodity) markets have a far greater impact on the economies of Less Developed Countries than do domestic planning policies, no matter what policies and plans are adopted." Throughout his book, Kreider juxtaposes what he perceives to be the merits of the Western capitalist system with the less positive characteristics of "socialist" systems, particularly as represented by the Soviet Union and its allies. In this context he repeatedly uses the prescriptive word "should" when identifying deficiencies of and offering correctives to third-world economies. Quite apart from the questionable realism of such ideological juxtapositioning, few "southern" governments are open to accepting "shoulds" from what is increasingly perceived as a dominating "northern" juggernaut.

Elliott places the debate in a different matrix. He argues that "asymmetrical power is the fundamental, perhaps *the* fundamental, principle that maintains processes of impoverishment . . . asymmetrical power operates at many levels—from the international to the village (level)" (p. 119). Drawing on New Testament insights he asks: "Why does power tend to be exercised in egocentric ways?" From this entry point Elliott launches into a profound analysis of the nature of power.

While Elliott critiques at the most basic level the exercise of asymmetrical power, Kreider proposes, not wholly uncritically, that capitalism be offered as the most attractive alternative for third-world peoples and that American economic aid be offered on that basis (p. 144, p. 184). Elliott assumes that the "north" is part of the problem; Kreider assumes that the United States in particular is an important part of the solution to third-world poverty. The most generous comment on these apparently disparate conclusions would posit them as two sides of the same coin. In fact they represent different assumptions and consequently different prescriptive action.

Kreider makes several favorable comments about the work of Mennonite Central Committee volunteers. He specifically suggests that every congregation should have a Hunger Concerns Committee (p. 148). And he does encourage listening, learning, participation, even on the most local level among the poor in North America. When traveling abroad, he encourages people to go not as tourists, but as concerned Christians, willing to learn about the plight of those who suffer in poverty. He commends the international service emphases on the college level, but insists that more expertise is required and that training on graduate levels must be encouraged. The action categories are "soft" and the ideology is "modern-Western," the assumptions with which Elliott is most uncomfortable.

In his critique of the past 25 years in development, Elliott is most pointedly critical of church-related development agencies. Our generation, he insists, is tempted to reduce complex and deep-seated realities to observable and collectable data. He cites the experience of ecumenical actors who are divided between those seduced into the "development-project-game" and those who have sought more basic levels of understanding and action.

As examples of more authentic change, he cites favorably action groups such as the Central American Witness for Peace, the Solidarity Movement in Poland, and the Christian Institute

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Harold F. Miller is currently on staff with Mennonite Central Committee as Africa Peace Resource, based at Conrad Grebel College. He previously served in Africa for 20 years.

in South Africa. An even stronger case is made for the work of Paulo Freire in radical literacy amidst themes of Liberation Theology. But he is most unrelenting in the focus on beginning points. In his view it is impossible from a biblical perspective to separate the "call to individual holiness from the call to global justice . . . we have to start by dealing with the roots of injustice in each of us" (p. 181).

Elliott makes a compelling case for the radical approach, ready to critique past experience, ready to begin with himself and with the most creative of change initiatives. But in the final analysis he, like Kreider, is also beholden to available data, visible information. In Africa there are examples of people groups (much effort is invested in group formation or reformation) realigning themselves away from the domination of modern-sector change patterns. Many such groups have experienced "modern" solutions and the implementers of those solutions as distinctly oppressive. There is talk of de-linking from the current international development idiom, and in the case of grass-root groups some even entertain selective de-linking from their respective national governments with their (mis)management of the modern sector. Thoughtful leaders in the third world, both national or very local, do not consider that the choice is between capitalism and communism. The choices open to them are more basic. And they choose to talk of a variety of more neutral alternatives.

In many parts of Africa, locally constituted groups seek legitimation in their own processes of reflection/action, appealing for the purpose to nuances and insights from "the village," from the past. They are not returning blindly to some pristine past; they are only saying that the future must at least take account of values from their own past—as they select and choose from the smorgasbord of change options. In some cases churches provide the context for such groups; frequently they operate outside the churches in distinctly neo-traditional modes. At this point it is not at all clear that such modes will become the dominant ones. But they are present alongside many other dynamics from the "north," reminding all concerned that options for the future—even though unnamed and unquantified—do include African options, or in the larger context, options generated in the "south."

An understanding of these kinds of movements in Africa has already altered the postures of "northern" solidarity and support. It is an understanding which calls for submission to relational criteria established by host communities. It calls for collaboration in the discovery of more acceptable categories for the conversation toward just development; categories which address "northern" issues as relentlessly as they address "southern" issues. In its best form, it represents a collective "north-south" commitment toward a fresh articulation of options for the future.

Reviewed by D. Merrill Ewert

Charles Elliott and Carl Kreider have written two very different books but with the same hope that Christians will read, understand, and therefore act in ways that will improve the lives of the world's poor. Kreider's *The Rich and the Poor* introduces readers in nontechnical terms to the economics of development. His purpose is to raise awareness of world poverty and to promote discussion of the issues. Elliott's *Comfortable Compassion* is a critique of the rich person's philanthropy and powerfully challenges conventional development philosophy and strategy. He argues that Christian thinking about poverty, injustice, and oppression has been largely self-defeating and ineffective. He posits as an alternative a new consciousness that emerges as people become aware of their problems through careful analysis of the oppressive social structures in which they are trapped. This alternative consciousness enables them to act in ways that transform these structures.

Elliott and Kreider share a biblical concern for the problems of the world's poor. Both recognize injustice and inequality between the rich and the poor. They share the belief that change is possible. Both call the Christian community to take specific actions that will redress the problems they have defined.

These similarities notwithstanding, Elliott and Kreider reflect significant differences beginning with the very definition of the problem their solutions seek to address. For Elliott, the central issue is power. Poverty, he argues, is not random but rather the direct result of actions that enrich some people and impoverish others. The poor are denied equal access to society's productive resources so the task of development is the call to structural change. Kreider's concern is that the basic needs of the poor are going unmet. Per capita food production in Africa, for example, is actually decreasing, leaving people poorer, more malnourished, and more vulnerable. As a solution, Kreider proposes increased agricultural production, reduced population growth, and the development of a viable infrastructure. He also underscores the need for better access to formal education, particularly by women, and for programs that improve health through the prevention of disease. Unfortunately, Kreider neither addresses nonformal education's significant contribution to development nor does he show how people in communities can address their own problems through collective actions. One is left with the impression that development assistance must be implemented from the outside on behalf of the poor.

While Kreider writes as an economist with an acknowledged capitalist bias, Elliott challenges some of the assumptions of this economic system. For Kreider, the task is to apply technical skills to meeting basic human needs. Elliott proposes an alternative strategy through which people learn to discuss and analyze their own problems, a process he calls the inward journey. This process exposes the structures that hold, oppress, and destroy people to the power of Christ. The result is a new consciousness.

Kreider criticizes structural inequality, calling for land reform as a necessary step for improved food production. Drawing on an example from West Africa, he describes the skewing of international markets to the advantage of Western nations. Burkina Faso produces and exports beef but cannot compete with frozen beef from France for markets in neighboring Ivory Coast. An explanation of economic relations between industrial and nonindustrial nations and how these should change would have strengthened the book. Kreider argues for the development of infrastructures among the poor nations. He points out how the third-world debt contributes to the problem of poverty and laments wasteful military spending that could fund agricultural and industrial development.

Although clearly sharing Elliott's concerns with unjust structures and inequality, Kreider's proposed solutions are very modest. He suggests increasing production, eating less food so that more money is available for development activity. He also endorses boycotts of products produced by companies that oppress the poor. Kreider considers these boycotts to be of symbolic significance. Elliott, by contrast, expects political actions of this kind to make a substantive difference. Kreider calls for

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D. Merrill Ewert is Director of Extension and Continuing Education at Wheaton College, Wheaton, Illinois.

reduced military spending, increased economic aid, and urges Western Christians to take service assignments in the third world. These practical suggestions have merit but are unlikely to change fundamentally the conditions that he defines as part of the problem.

Kreider's preoccupation with increased production is matched by Elliott's call for justice. Elliott challenges what he calls the modernization paradigm in which development agencies plan short-term projects of technical assistance in health, agriculture, and other sectors of life. The church, he argues, has overinvested in inadequate development approaches. It has accepted the secular view of development as a bundle of well-intentioned projects that fail to address the fundamental issue of power that underlies all social and political relations. The project approach has not worked, Elliott suggests. Schools have become training institutions for society's elite. Agricultural projects have improved the lives of wealthy farmers. Church development offices have become oppressive bureaucracies incapable of addressing human problems at their source. Church programs, he concludes, are often co-opted by governments since Christians cannot effectively critique a structure upon which they depend to fund their programs.

For Elliott, dialogue is the mechanism for change. As people examine and discuss their problems, they see and understand power relationships that are then subjected to a biblically based ethical critique. Unlike Paulo Freire, Elliott recognizes the reality of evil behind the structures of injustice. He believes that the life, death, and resurrection of Christ are central in the ultimate victory over what he describes as "the powers." In the cross, love absorbs abuses of power and in that process judges them. The church's task is to expose that power to the story of Christ.

As the poor and powerless express their own interests and concerns, the rich and powerful will learn to use their wealth in new ways. They will address the goals set by the poor and oppressed rather than working for their own aggrandizement. Elliott calls for seeing private choices in social terms and calls for a shift from charitable concerns of the kind proposed by Kreider to structural action that changes the position of the poor. It is Christ, Elliott reminds us, and not people themselves, who will redeem unjust structures. The church's role is merely to confront structures with the consequences of their own existence.

Elliott proposes that structures are opened in several ways. The effects of structures are revealed through critical analysis. The position of the church is alongside those who suffer from injustice and oppression. The mechanism of the process is dialogue that raises questions about the system and looks for transformation. The consequences of this challenge, as the author shows, are often unpleasant.

Both books are highly recommended but for different reasons. Kreider will introduce the uninitiated to aspects of economic development. The discussion questions at the end of each chapter will stimulate reflection among people who want to understand some international economic realities. Readers will hear a clarion call to service on behalf of a task that is "over there." Elliott's analysis, on the other hand, implies that it is at least partly "over here" among those of us who control the structures of power.

Elliott's analysis of the relationship between structures, power, and injustice is insightful. His paradigm both recognizes the reality of evil and the power of Christ to transform. Christians who reject Liberation Theology because of its assumptions will have to take Elliott's biblical concern for justice more seriously. His critique of project-oriented development activity is both warranted and timely. He places problems in a broader perspective often ignored by development workers consumed with the urgency of the task before them. This stimulating book should be read by all development planners, administrators, and implementers.

Although one may accept much of what Elliott says as a necessary corrective to contemporary approaches to Christian development, his rejection of the modernization paradigm is tantamount to throwing out the proverbial baby with the bath water. One can find examples of this alternative consciousness emerging in a project setting. His enthusiasm for development as "process" and subsequent denigration of "projects" overlooks the fact that a "project" is little more than a management tool to facilitate a process. At the operational level, development workers will be hard-pressed to call people to an "inward journey" that leads to "structural transformation." It is not that simple. The poor and oppressed *will* discuss their problems and examine their options but only with the belief that some specific, direct action will follow. Community health programs, for example, can generate the alternative consciousness of which Elliott speaks but only where the poor believe that the objective conditions within which they live will be transformed. The naive reader may sound the call to the alternative paradigm and find that none of the poor and oppressed bother to answer!

The stimulating challenge of *Comfortable Compassion* at the conceptual level will not translate easily into practice. Readers working in refugee camps in Ethiopia and rehabilitation programs in Mozambique will scratch their heads, trying to figure out what they are supposed to do next. The book's examples (Witness for Peace in Nicaragua, the Peace Movement in the UK, the Christian Institute of Southern Africa, and Solidarity in Poland) all address macro-level structural issues. Clearly, political action by those with an alternative consciousness can make a difference. Hopefully, readers will respond with programs that promote justice. However, will the basic needs of the poor to which Kreider speaks, be left unmet by Elliott's alternative consciousness? At the beginning of the book, Elliott speaks of hungry Ethiopians as the tip of the iceberg and argues for developing lasting solutions. At the end of the book, they are still hungry.

It would be interesting to see Elliott assess efforts by Tanzania, Cuba, and Nicaragua to implement some of these concepts in their national development strategies. They have addressed issues of power and structure in attempting to meet basic human needs but without the Christian commitment that Elliott brings to this discussion. In spite of several limitations identified in this review, *Comfortable Compassion* is the most challenging book on development that this reviewer has read in many years. It is a major contribution to the church's ongoing dialogue on this important topic.

The North American church is sadly misinformed regarding the problems of the poor and oppressed. These two books are highly recommended as a step in furthering understanding of these issues.

West and East Under the Cross

VERN RATZLAFF

The Orthodox churches of the East are different in many ways from Western churches. Eastern churches diverged from the Western church in 1054 or earlier. Later during the Reformation, Protestants diverged from the Roman church, and other groups have diverged from the Protestant Reformation since then. The churches of the West and East have been isolated geographically and emotionally for over a millennium. So when the Western churches hear about exuberant youth programs among the Syrian Orthodox, or crowded churches among the Egyptian Orthodox, they are surprised to recognize an alive and growing church.

How should the Western church view its Eastern brothers and sisters? Traditionally, the Western churches—both Protestant and Catholic—have seen the Eastern churches as mission fields. During the nineteenth century the predominant pattern was proselytizing and establishing new churches. While much in the Eastern churches was less than vibrant and vital, the Western churches made no effort to identify possible centers of renewal. As strong currents of renewal appear in the twentieth century among Eastern churches, the West must recognize this potential for renewal and provide spiritual, intellectual, and institutional support. There are at least five ways to do this.

Basic responsibilities of the Western church

Western churches can show support to Eastern churches, first of all, by acknowledging the existence of the Eastern church even after two millennia. During that 2000-year period Eastern Christians have faced almost unrelieved persecution and harassment as a minority group. The Egyptian church, for example, was persecuted first by the Romans and Byzantines, and later harassed by Islam. While the church virtually died out in North Africa, it continues in the Middle East—a sign that God has not left himself without witness.

A second kind of needed support is for the Western church to take history seriously. History tends to be Western-centered. For Protestants it is Reformation-centered. With its focus on the Bible, the theology of the church (ecclesiology) has been almost totally ignored in the West. We need to see church history and the continuing presence of the church as constituting a third kind of testament.

One facet of taking history seriously lies in cultivating a historical perspective. The church must identify its own agenda rather than following the agenda of the state. Churches tend to react to their government's agenda, to societal pressures, or to the media to focus their consciousness. If political structures of the Middle East are perceived as irrelevant or extraneous to Western needs or pressure points, Western churches will fail to take the East and its Christian counterparts seriously. Gabriel Habib, executive director of the Middle East Council of Churches, states bluntly, "We are not seen as partners of Western Christianity; we are not seen as intelligent enough, not powerful enough." Western governments deal with power structures—such as the Islamic states or the Jewish state. This model is followed by the Western church, consciously or unconsciously. Because Eastern churches are financially weak, have no voice in their government, and are marginal to the real centers of power and decision-making, Western churches have frequently ignored them when setting agendas or goals.

Third, Western and Eastern churches must become partners, particularly in sharing human resources. The priorities of the local Eastern church are frequently ignored by Western churches—particularly by parachurch agencies and those who see the Eastern churches primarily as mission fields.

Even service agencies who concentrate on development priorities tend to overlook local churches by generating and implementing their own programs rather than working jointly in articulation and implementation. Western churches evaluate society from a Western secular perspective, forgetting that the Eastern society is organized confessionally.

For an agency to begin a program independent of the local church is to make a statement that the local church is not sufficiently competent to be considered a partner. It is a negative reflection. The local ecclesia must be consulted, and attempts must be made to establish accountability. The goal of the Western church is to help mobilize the resources of the local church, to equip it for mission (Eph. 4:12). While progress has been made in partnership, it is important that financial and human resources are invested with the heads of the local church to help it reach its own potential.

A fourth means of providing support is for Western churches to recognize that money does not constitute a quick fix. Subverting the local church with an influx of resources can sap local initiative. Western investment can have a negative effect. As much as Western church agencies emphasize servanthood to their Eastern counterparts, the fact remains that they have access to money and people. Such access means power. The availability of such resources may well corrupt both partners, not in a moral sense but in a subversive sense.

An example of this is the Coptic Evangelical Church in Egypt. The church has an energetic program of social services involving more than 230 people engaged in community development projects (agricultural, literacy programs, health clinics, and income-generating programs). But virtually the entire payroll is met by foreign contributions. As long as outside resources are available, leaders will not look for ways to become independent. While the programs are locally based and generated, their continuance is largely dependent on external funding.

This is not the only example. Western churches, especially European churches, give large financial grants to the Coptic Orthodox community. Not wishing to be paternalistic, they require only the most perfunctory forms of accountability.

This availability of Western resources furthers the dependency syndrome of the church and leads to the assumption that it is up to the rich West to provide. Thus there is little reason to order priorities, and huge amounts of money are spent without being monitored for maximized effectiveness. This does not imply mismanagement or personal malfeasance. Western churches are anxious to maintain a liberal, non-

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Vern and Helen Ratzlaff live in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, where Vern pastors the Nutana Park Mennonite Church. Vern was formerly a Mennonite Central Committee country representative in Egypt.

paternalistic posture, and therefore avoid their responsibility for being caring, confronting partners and true servants. Christian stewardship, mutual accountability, and servanthood are all necessary components of a healthy church theology. Perhaps these components cannot be held concurrently without tension.

A fifth responsibility of the Western church is to remember that unity for the church is centered in Jesus and the power of the Holy Spirit. For many church and parachurch agencies, the center of unity (the rallying point) is money and control. Western programs can fragment a minority church by moving a pastor or priest away from a primary relationship to his own local ecclesia by offering funds for projects that are not necessarily part of his own agenda. This form of buying off those "who are like us" weakens their relationship and marginalizes their effectiveness and integrity with the national church. A local congregation that generates funds from donor agencies even to develop its own activities will be seen as receiving its strength from the outside rather than its own resources. It underscores a continued dependency. For example, one parachurch agency sponsored a leadership seminar, bringing in outside resources. In fact, the whole program was parachuted with minimal involvement from local church leaders. The irony is that while it emphasized leadership training, the seminar by its very approach invalidated the message of local accountability, giving not-so-subtle hints that such training must come from abroad.

These five basic responsibilities reflect a double need. One need is to demonstrate to the Muslim and Jewish societies that the church is universal, evidenced through its ecumenical relations, joint activities, and sharing of resources. But another, more crucial need is to demonstrate to both non-Christian societies that the church is local, that the essential power of the church lies not in the international context (i.e., being allied to, or a reflection of, the power structures of the West), but in local manifestations. The power of the church lies in powerless people who understand that their only power comes from the crucified Christ and from the Holy Spirit.

Parenthetically, the Western church's impact on the Coptic churches (both Orthodox and Evangelical) has been ambiguous. First, parachurch agencies often ignore, fragment, and subvert the local church by working from a theology of triumphalism rather than of servanthood. Second, the Egyptian churches (and the Egyptian government vis-à-vis foreign aid) have developed a dependency on Western resources without creatively identifying and mobilizing their own financial resources. Third, Western churches, not wanting to appear colonialistic or paternalistic, have tended to send funds without expecting full accountability.

Renewal within the Eastern church

What are the sources of renewal in the Eastern church that the West can relate to and affirm? First and most important is its human resource, particularly in the Syrian and Coptic Orthodox churches and the Coptic Evangelical church. Western churches and agencies need to identify those persons who can be encouraged in what they are already doing. Pastors and priests are working effectively to renew personal and corporate faith. Increasing numbers of the clergy come out of professions into the formal ministry of the church. This keeps the church in contact with an increasingly educated and professional laity.

A second source of renewal comes from schools of theology. These schools are generally old and have suffered under centuries of Ottoman rule, but are now experiencing a renaissance. They attempt to contextualize theology, taking seriously their mission ("How do we teach Islam?") and particular theological emphases ("How do we formulate doctrines of the Trinity in an Islamic culture?"). An association of theological institutions and an exchange of professors help to strengthen the interconfessional debate. One of the casualities of the Lebanese anarchy is the Near East School of Theology, an interconfessional seminary.

A third center of renewal lies in youth. For several decades, a consortium, which attempts to keep ties with Orthodox young people studying in Europe and to promote fellowship within the home countries, has tied Orthodox churches together. The Syrian Orthodox church was especially active in this movement; an Orthodox educational group is still functioning in Jordan with similar goals. Impressive youth activities among the Coptic Orthodox in Egypt include retreats, weekly Bible study, and prayer meetings. These activities for maintaining contact with the student world help to ensure a committed laity and are centers for evangelism and renewal.

At the same time, clergy activities may be seen as pastoral activism, with so much pressure on day-by-day tasks and not enough time to reflect, analyze, and project. For example, take Father Sarabamone of Ain Shams, a working-class neighborhood in Cairo. He oversees his church's building construction project, a day care center, a vocational training institute for males (in carpentry, ikonography, mosaic, inlay); he organizes foreign language classes, sponsors spiritual retreats, engages in vigorous home visitation with his dispersed congregation, and sponsors family teaching and theological workshops. In short, his working hours are incredible. The schedules of renewal-conscious bishops approach formidable marathons of 20-hour days. An Eastern inability to delegate responsibility adds trivia to more serious pastoral concerns.

Pastoral concerns are in themselves sufficiently awesome. Bishop Marcos (an auto design engineer with Fiat, turned monk, turned bishop) of Shoubra al Keima, a slum neighborhood in north Cairo, has some 360,000 Christians in his diocese—with only 25 priests. (He says he could consecrate more, but he is concerned about finding dedicated people "who do more than burn incense.") These same clergy must wrestle with the problems of maintaining a relevant Christianity.

Some recognize there "are some historic burdens we can do without." One Coptic Orthodox bishop commented that the traditions regulating fasting (the abstaining from animal products about 250 days per year) were not always part of the church's practice, so perhaps they can be terminated. What has not always been does not always have to continue. But the Coptic Orthodox Church lacks a theology of change that can permit the familiar and traditional to be challenged and rechanneled.

Another good source of renewal is the spiritual and theological heritage of the Eastern church. Attempts to rediscover their roots have included publishing the ancient Syrian fathers and ancient Arabic Christian writers whose reflections (e.g., on Islamic theology) have great relevance for the present. Pressure from the West strengthens the assumption that all theology originates in the West, and even contemporary Middle East theologians find it difficult to obtain an audience. A movement is under way to prepare videos of current Arab theologians reflecting on the Christian renewal movements that took place during specific periods of Muslim domination, as well as collecting Arab theologians' manuscripts to make them more widely available. Their heritage has been ignored or looked at by only a few in the West, yet it constitutes a stream that has the potential for reviving the Eastern church from within, rather than from without. Ironically, most of these early writings, including those of the Alexandrian school and of the desert fathers, are available only in Greek and thus are not easily available to an Arab-speaking audience.

The impact of Zionism

One factor complicating relations between the Western and Eastern churches—and especially between the Eastern churches and their Muslim neighbors—has been the creation of the state of Israel. This gives the Eastern church the new task of defining their identity vis-à-vis Islam and Judaism, a major agenda item in almost any serious conversation. For local Christians who have been influenced by Western dispensationalist groups that are strongly pro-Zionist, the situation leads to a kind of schizophrenia.

On the one hand, they can interpret the planting of Israel among them as a fulfillment of biblical prophetic interpretation, and therefore divinely ordained. On the other hand, they may have lost land or family at the hands of Israeli troops or settlements, or may be citizens of a country that has been at war with Israel, so that loyalties to their state produce real tensions that are at odds with their theological convictions.

The seeming inability of the Western church to recognize the existence of Arab Christians—or when they do recognize them to say in effect, "Too bad, you're in the way of prophetic fulfillment"—is another problem between East and West. The vast majority of tourists to Israel never meet Arabs, let alone Arab Christians, except in the "cute" surroundings of "Old" Jerusalem. There, with breathless awe, a pilgrim in a "Christian" hostel announced bravely she had actually met an Arab who was a Christian. These tourists do not pause to consider the implications of their theology for the Christians in Syria, Jordan, or Egypt, especially when these theologies are translated into hard political and military realities (e.g., an invasion of Lebanon).

Some reflective Eastern Christians see Zionism as an ethnic ideology, not a religious persuasion. In the nineteenth century, Eastern Muslims, Christians, and Jews studied in Europe and saw themselves bound together in a common struggle against the Turks. All three viewed the future as being characterized by secular states; religious pluralism would be the unifying creed. Now that both Islam and Judaism-*cum*-Zionism have rejected a secular nationalism and have instituted religious states, Christians feel their isolation. Once they thought they had solved the minority question by working at a secular approach, where all would be equal; now they are isolated once more. To make matters worse, the West makes possible the continuance of the most rigid uniconfessional (religious) states in the area. Western churches tend to provide theological bases for this interpretation. What is the Christian hope in this context; to make a "Christian" state *a la* the Maronite attempt in Lebanon, or to leave and seek new homes in other countries where religious pluralism is permitted and thus exacerbate the Christian brain drain?

In practical terms, many Western church agencies carry on programs in the area as if there were no local church. For them, Arab Christians do not exist. About 36 Western church agencies or parachurch agencies, for example, have offices in Cyprus, acting as bases for their work in the Middle East. None have established relations with the Greek Orthodox patriarchate in Cyprus. Western agencies continue to act as though the Middle East consists of Muslims, Jews, and pagan Christians and to function from power structures rather than fraternal relations.

Coming together: knowing the general and the specific

But even when the Western churches recognize all these dimensions and complexities, is it possible for them to help without subverting the Eastern churches? Is "help" even the wrong word? Is it realistic to talk about partnership or servanthood when the Western churches hold all the power—Western passports, money, personnel, expertise (information, knowledge), connections to these or related resources? My perception has been that when local church administrators would ask for a teacher or a grant, these church patriarchs would be cast in the role of beggars seeking crumbs from our Western tables. This is probably inescapable, given the complexity of the situation and the acute realities of relationships. Servanthood is easier to talk about than to practice. To use myself as an example, as a member of a Christian college faculty, I talked much of servanthood. But I had my own parking stall, extra library privileges, and freedom of schedule that students or office staff did not have. And as administrator of a church agency where the term "servanthood" was used often, I had privileges of privacy, of movement, of access to decision-making channels and facilities and resources that other staff did not.

So the question of relating in a way that will not subvert has no obvious answer. But some approaches are less openly chauvinistic than others. First, to maintain integrity the Western church and agency workers need to live with the local people and churches before making decisions. They must avoid going in with their own priorities or agendas. Second, they must make sensitive and patient attempts to recognize and identify the real agents of change and momentum of Eastern church renewal, and then seek a partnership with Eastern leaders of renewal in a way that will not marginalize or isolate them from their colleagues. The time may well come that such renewal will create unbearable tensions within elements of the church which are more interested in conversing than in faithfulness to the creative work of the Holy Spirit. But ill-advised impatience and insensitivity should not be the only response to a perceived conservative obtuseness. If the people worked with, those "helped," are not really part of the ecclesia, impact and momentum for real change will usually be minimal.

Several years ago the pastor of a church asked me to supply some teachers for a school he was starting. Although he was active in the Coptic Evangelical Church, the school was his own project, independent of the Coptic Evangelical synod's extensive school system with which we already had a dozen teacher placements. Because his school promised to provide good interaction with the community and because his congregation had an active social service program as well as a spiritual outreach component, we placed staff there. But after four years we terminated our relationship for a variety of reasons. Underlying each reason was our growing awareness that he was not really accountable to the larger church, and that despite a great deal of psychic energy and professional skill investment, we were not really helping to make part of the local church more viable.

Further, our participation with an individual placed strains both on his relations to other sectors of the church, and on our functioning with other levels of the church. We were, in effect, helping to increase his separation from his own church structures by making him less acountable to them. We were also creating dependency on us. I had made a mistake, and much of what has been written here flows from reflection on that relationship.

In terms of long-range effectiveness, it might be advantageous for the Western agencies to spend less on agriculture and health-development programs and more in assisting leadership training, leadership development, and program evaluation. This may well constitute the greatest single factor for helping the Eastern church order its own priorities, identify its resources, and implement its own agenda. Western agencies may well be able to stage leadership conferences on a more sophisticated scale than the local church can. But doing so rather than encouraging the Eastern sister church to work at the issue will in the long run hinder the process.

Thus far we have discussed general principles along with impressions and examples that illustrate some of those dynamics. A general understanding of the Eastern churches is valuable, but working among local churches requires specific knowledge of the history and current ethos of those groups. What follows is a brief review of some of the factors and impressions that affected my work among churches in Egypt.

The Greek Orthodox Church vitality, compared with that of the Coptic Orthodox community, is at a low ebb. Services are poorly attended; the monasteries are literally dying out; few youth appear to be involved. Visits to monasteries yield the impressions that visitors are intruders. There is little evidence of the monks interacting with the faithful such as the Greek Orthodox, let alone Western heretics.

In contrast, Coptic Orthodox services are usually well attended, monasteries are flourishing, and many youth attend the wide variety of activities offered. Youth activities are a priority of many in the church's hierarchy. Visits to monasteries bring people into contact with the monks who see these contacts as an extension of their hospitality and an important part of their service.

The Coptic Orthodox Church is preoccupied with centralized authority and decision-making, coupled in some sectors with an easy pietism. Harassment at the hands of the Muslim majority has resulted in feelings of insecurity, and such a community is easily mobilized by authoritarianism. This tends to follow the Egyptian state model. Egyptian Islam, though, is also basic, unsophisticated, and readily authoritarian leader-oriented.

Egyptian churches have become extremely vulnerable to outside influences. The Coptic Evangelicals have an official "open door" policy. (Egypt under Sadat initiated an "open door" policy for economic reasons.) Under this policy, the Coptic Evangelicals are prepared to work with any Western agency. An unfortunate result of this policy is that the church displays little sense of discrimination, and many practices and pop theologies are being imported that—in my opinion and the opinion of some leaders—are fragmenting the church. The results are less of a cohesive home-based theology and too much theological trendiness imported from the West.

The Coptic Orthodox seem to range from the closed to the totally eclectic. One monk, active in the youth renewal movement, is a loyal celebrant of the liturgy; he is also enamored of Watchman Nee and Puritan pietists, reflecting theological traditions at wide variance with Coptic Orthodox theology. These tensions cannot be maintained much longer, and the Egyptian churches will have to begin indigenizing theological reflection. Unfortunately, the non-reflective and authoritarian nature of Orthodox hierarchy has resulted in suspension or excommunication of some of its best theologians.

The Coptic Orthodox Church has an almost unquestioning trust of tradition and authority; the reflective practice of theology has little scope. Several of the church's most creative theologians have been forced to leave; one of these, ironically, was attempting a renaissance of the early fathers who are more revered than read, primarily because their writings are available only in Greek, not in Arabic.

As in most of the universal churches, Coptic Orthodox have little concept of a theology of change. In Egypt, it may be the last vestige of pharaonic metaphysics. The Copts, aware of being a minority, see a strongly centralized authority as the only way to maintain identity and retain unity. The Syrian Orthodox Church, in contrast, while also a minority, is much more open to change and renewal forms. Their change and renewal forms are based more on reflection of their nature and history than on borrowing unqualifiedly from the West.

Centers of renewal in the Coptic Orthodox church are not so much in its institutions, such as its seminaries, but in its ecclesia or the diocese. This makes it all the more urgent that the Western church be involved at the diocesan or congregational level. Too often interaction is restricted to formal visits and exchange of pleasantries at higher ecclesiastic levels or involvement in World Council of Churches committees.

But as Bishop Tedros said, "In the committees we talk of such abstract things, but not about the work of the church."

New Religious Movements: The Neglected Component of Missionary Preparation

STAN NUSSBAUM

(This is the first in a series of four articles on the study of new religious movements. Stan Nussbaum, a former missionary to Lesotho, is now on staff at the Centre for New Religious Movements, Selly Oak Colleges, Birmingham, England.)

For Mennonite missionaries working with new religious movements in Cote d'Ivoire, Benin, Botswana, Swaziland, Lesotho, and the Transkei, South Africa, the need to study these new movements is obvious. But these workers represent only a small portion of Mennonites serving overseas and a fraction of the total current missionary personnel. Why should the majority of missionaries take new religious movements seriously unless they are going to work with them directly? Why is this topic so critical?

These questions will be answered in this series of articles along the following lines: the study of new movements 1) will more properly define the content and method of missionary preparation; 2) will provide an index to the religious lives of members of mission-founded churches; 3) will throw significant light on terms which are central to current mission training and missiological discussion—such as partnership, contextualization, dialogue, church growth, and money (including development and church administration); and 4) will raise one missiological issue that deserves much more attention, namely, a theology of peoples, cultures, and languages. The missionary who is interested in this list of issues (and what missionary worthy of the name is not?) should be interested in new movements.

Why has such an important subject been neglected for so long? Perhaps missionaries wrongly assume that new religious movements in the third world are roughly comparable to those in the West, such as Hare Krishna, the Unification Church, or the older movements such as Jehovah's Witnesses. Missionaries then tend to evaluate third-world movements in the same way and dismiss them as inconsequential heresies appealing only to the lunatic fringe of society. North American pastors can minister effectively for a whole lifetime without knowing much history, theology, and practice of the Mormons. Cannot missionaries serve effectively in other continents without paying attention to religious movements?

They cannot, and the assumption that they can must be exposed as an example of ethnocentric reasoning. It is simply not true that the nature and size of new movements in the third world is analogous to that of movements in the home culture of most missionaries. These third-world movements cannot be understood in familiar terms; they must be understood on their own terms in their own settings.

This type of argument is very much in step with current missiological thinking. There are increasing signs of a trend toward promoting the study of movements by a broader spectrum of missionaries, as well as by members of third-world churches which missionaries have founded.[1]

Special study centers have been established by Kenneth Scott at Lima, Peru; by G. C. Oosthuizen at Durban, South Africa; and by Harold Turner at Birmingham, England. The Melanesian Institute is giving the research of new movements a high priority on its broader agenda.[2] David Barrett's *World Christian Encyclopedia* documents the importance of new movements.[3] Missiologists such as Andrew Walls (Edinburgh), Walter Hollenweger (Birmingham), Bengt Sundkler (Uppsala), M. L. Daneel (Pretoria), and Dean Gilliland (Fuller) argue that new movements must be taken far more seriously by missionaries and third-world churches. Hollenweger asks, "Will we (in Europe and America) find a way to see the ecumenical and missiological values of these 'unauthorized' churches who—in many places—outnumber the 'authorized churches' by far?"[4]

In spite of this progress, however, most missionaries and missiologists still view new movements as an interest of specialists only. The study of new movements is merely what dog shows are to dog breeders, something that a few people give their whole lives to while the rest of the world passes by without knowing or caring what the difference is between a keeshond and a Lhasa Apso. This brings us back to our original question—what relevance does the study of new religious movements have for the average misssionary?

Immediately, some healthy questions are raised about the content and methods of missionary preparation in general. When missionaries study countries and peoples, what do they study about them? The standard approach in seminaries and Bible colleges has been to study the major religion of a given country (Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam) and to focus on the theology of that religion. Where Christianity is the major religion, the focus is on the local dominant theology, such as Liberation Theology. The result is that many missionaries study the wrong things in the wrong way.

Which religion to study?

Without denying the importance of studying the world's major religions and theologies, I would suggest that it does not reflect the type of religion which most missionaries actually meet. Stephen Neill notes, "The religion of the inhabitants of most South Indian villages bears very little relation to classical Hinduism, as it has become familiar to students from the textbooks."[5] He further observes that statistics on world religions are often misleading; millions of people who are classified as Hindus should more accurately be considered "primals" or "tribals," and millions more are found in areas where Hinduism and primal religion overlap and interact—exactly the areas where new movements emerge.

Phil Parshall notes the same idea with respect to Islam, estimating that well over half of the world's practicing Muslims are in fact adherents of "folk Islam" not "textbook Islam."[6] In places like Bangladesh the percentage of variance is so high that the form of Islam practiced at the grass-roots level may actually be closer to primal religion or even the new religious movements in India and Africa than it is to orthodox Sunni Islam.

Brazil is another case in point. A missionary going to Brazil will be encouraged to study Liberation Theology; few are advised to study new religious interaction movements such as Umbanda or Candomble. David Grainger, a British Baptist who served fourteen years in Brazil, told me recently that if he could have had a study leave during that period he would have left all the Liberation Theology books on the shelf and gone straight to the Umbanda and Candomble materials, because these were the movements he struggled with. Erwin Rempel, a Mennonite mission administrator who also worked in Brazil, observed that he felt least adequate as a missionary in the area of understanding these new spiritist movements. At the local level, where the Brazilian church lives and ministers, the people may be hard-pressed to define Liberation Theology or to name even one liberation theologian, but they could all direct you to the nearest *terreiro*, the house or building where spiritist rituals are performed and spirits are worshiped every Friday at midnight.

Another aspect of the Brazilian example is that new religious movements with a basis in primal religion appeal to both rural and urban poor, as well as a significant percentage of the rich and powerful. A recent BBC documentary on Brazilian religions showed one famous spiritist priestess whose clientele is largely upper-class. There are widely believed rumors that at least one recent Brazilian president had a resident *mae de santo* (priestess, literally "mother of saints") so he could consult whenever he wished. On a new series of Brazilian coins issued about five years ago, two Umbanda symbols were included in a small design on the back.[7] Clearly Umbanda cannot be dismissed as a "jungle" religion promoted by people still wearing loincloths. Nor is it just a mumbo-jumbo system which only uneducated, desperately poor people could ever believe. Perhaps some persons have overstated the case when they assert that spiritism, including Umbanda, is the national religion of Brazil, but they are closer to the truth than the missionary who thinks Umbanda need not be studied.

Since North Americans lack personal experiences which would prepare them to deal with the challenge of Umbanda or to support Brazilian Christians who confront spiritism as the dominant religious force, programs of missionary preparation must attempt to fill the gap. This may be done partly by emphasizing the folk forms of the world religions and by understanding religions as systems of power rather than merely systems of ideas.[8] However, unless these approaches are supplemented by the study of primal religion and new religious movements, the preparation will be deficient. Only when missionaries begin to minister do they realize they are overprepared for what they rarely encounter—namely textbook religion—and underprepared for the actual religious situation they experience every day.

Religious studies versus theology

The argument to this point has stressed the importance of studying the right religion—that is, the one the missionary will meet in real life. If that point is accepted, it shifts the emphasis in the study of religion from theology to religious practice. Our current emphasis on theology is obvious. North American Christianity is an extremely cognitive form of religion. Many missionary candidates would be consistent with their own religious upbringing if they reduced the whole of religion to theology—or at least considered theology the most important part and the key to all other parts.

True, every religion does have a theology, or a fairly coherent framework of ideas rooted in one or more worldviews. It may be a useful exercise for a Western missionary to construct such a framework in order to understand a given religion. However, it is being claimed that the missionary is likely to spend too much time studying third-world theologies and too little studying third-world religions.

The distinction between theology and religion has not been adequately appreciated in missionary training. Too often religion is seen as a bad word and theology as a good one. Many missionaries would happily agree that they want to understand and export a biblical theology, but not many would want to be described as carriers of biblical religion. There are many courses on Black Theology, Liberation Theology, Minjung Theology, etc., but where are the courses on Black Religion, Liberation Religion, and Minjung Religion? And why is it that the terms African Theology and Asian Theology are associated with Christianity while the terms African Religion and Asian Religion have non-Christian connotations?

Missionaries trained in theology but not religion are ill-equipped to recognize that for most of the rest of the world, theology is not considered central to religion either because nothing that really matters can be captured in concepts (Hinduism, Buddhism) or because theorizing itself does not really matter (primal religion). Furthermore, the missionary may put too much trust in theology as the way to introduce change of perspective of, and allegiance to, local religions and movements. When this happens the theological input of the missionary is interpreted from the perspectives of the local religions and distorted, sometimes leading to the formation of still another new movement.

How would the study of religion as opposed to the study of theology prevent this? In this brief space the answer can only be suggestive. Primarily, the difference is that study of religion is more open-ended, more likely to provide the missionary with the tools and motivation to continue learning about the local religion once in the country of service. For example, a simple model of the constituent parts of a religion, such as Harold Turner's five-part model of religious experience, creed, cult, code, and community,[9] opens a missionary's mind so that analysis of a local religion is possible.

A missionary with this type of training knows what to look for in another religion and how the parts of a religion fit together. To the trained missionary, local religious rituals are not seen as strange and threatening. They can be approached as objects of study, appreciated as sensible parts of a well-intentioned religion, and sometimes adapted or adopted for Christian use. This does not mean that the missionary endorses them all: in fact, the person who has carefully studied local religion can confront its errors more selectively and powerfully than the one who fulminates against everything traditional without studying any of it.

An index to third-world Christianity

If students shift focus somewhat from world religions to new religious movements and from theology to religion as a whole, they will gain considerable insight in a number of areas. One of the least expected has to do with the missionary's understanding of his or her own church. The missionary who studies new movements will better understand his or her own church in a given country. This may seem like claiming that people should study cows in order to understand horses, since some of the new movements are altogether different species from the Christian church. However, in most of Africa the distinction is hard to make. Andrew Walls suggests that "African Christianity is broadly a whole, with the independents providing a general index of its features, rather than being an entity to be treated separately."[10] If Walls is correct, the vast literature on African independent churches could be subtitled "What Christianity in all African churches is really like," and one can imagine the increase of interest in the field.

The relationships of independents to mission church members is not that of cows to horses but that of the tip of the iceberg to the submerged part.[11] The missionary who wants to know what the people in the mission-founded church really think about traditional medicine, ancestral spirits, salvation, Jesus, etc., may have more direct access to that information by studying the independent churches than by studying the mission churches themselves. There are many things which African lay Christians routinely hide from the clergy and especially from missionaries. In the independent churches these things are out in the open, "above the waterline," since the independent churches are led by people from whom such things need not be hidden. Of course, the independents will also hide things from a missionary visitor until proper trust is developed, and not every missionary will be in a situation conducive to personal field research. Even so, the study of independent movements may be the shortest route a missionary can take into the hearts and minds of mission church members.

It may be argued that Africa is a special case in which independent movements are much closer to traditional Christianity than elsewhere in the world. That is true, but it must be remembered that even in places like Haiti, where the religious interaction movement—voodoo—has only the most superficial resemblance to Christianity, a missionary who wants to know how Haitian church members think should study voodoo. Many church members, including the majority of Roman Catholics, participate in voodoo rites. All Haitians live in a world where voodoo is credible and pervasive, and the missionary who has no insight into that world will not minister effectively in Haiti. Therefore, whether the new movements are similar to the imported forms of Christianity (as in much of Africa) or quite different from it (as in Haiti), it is still essential to study the new movements in order to understand how the church members think and how they travel the road of Christian discipleship.

Notes

1. The study of these movements has generally been neglected by members of mission-founded churches, though some seminaries are beginning to introduce courses in this area. In the long term it will be more important for local Christians to study the movements than for missionaries, but that is a separate topic which cannot be adequately handled in this series written for missionaries and missiologists.

2. See *Religious Movements in Melanesia Today* (Goroka, Papua New Guinea: Melanesian Institute), vols. 1-2, 1983, and vol. 3, 1984. Other titles in the POINT series include some useful articles.

3. The Vatican survey report, which is not presented as an official Vatican position, has been published in several places including *Briefing '86*, 16 (12), 1986, pp. 141-152, available from the Catholic Media Office, 23 Kensington Square, London W8 SHN, England.

4. Walter J. Hollenweger, unpaginated preface to P. Solomon Raj, *A Christian Folk-Religion in India* (Frankfurt: Verlag Peter Lang, 1986). The book is number 40 in the series *Studies in the Intercultural History of Christianity*, which includes several other titles on new movements.

5. Stephen Neill, *Christian Faith and Other Faiths* (London: Oxford, 1961), p. 125.

6. Phil Parshall, *Bridges to Islam: A Christian Perspective on Folk Islam* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1983).

7. The symbols are a small shell (*buzio*) and the small cross of a particular shape commonly used in spiritist rituals.

8. Timothy Warner of Trinity Evangelical Divinity School is one noted spokesperson for the "power encounter" aspect of missionary preparation. See his article "Power Encounter in Evangelism," *Trinity*

World Forum, Winter 1985, pp. 1-3.

9. Unpublished teaching materials used in Harold Turner's course on the study of religion at Selly Oak Colleges. He relates his categories closely to Ninian Smart's six-part typology and Eric Sharpe's four-part one. See Ninian Smart, *The Religious Experience of Mankind* (London: Collins, 1969), pp. 15-25, and Eric Sharpe, *Understanding Religion* (London: G. Duckworth, 1983), pp. 91-107.

10. Andrew Walls, personal communication quoted by Janet Hodgson in "The Symbolic Entry Point: Removing the Veil of Structure from the Study of Religious Movements," unpublished paper read at the NERMIC 1985 symposium on African independent churches held at Durban under the auspices of the University of Zululand.

11. The iceberg image is not mentioned specifically by David B. Barrett but his "tribal zeitgeist" model with its dotted line dividing "latent resistance" within mission churches from "overt resistance" resulting in new movements does look vaguely like an iceberg (*Schism and Renewal in Africa*, Nairobi: Oxford University Press, 1968, p. 211). His point is the same as the one made here—the continuity between independent and mission churches must be taken as seriously as the discontinuity.

How My Understanding of Mission Has Developed

FRANCES F. HIEBERT

When I was four years old, I literally "walked the sawdust trail" when an itinerant evangelist held revival meetings in our community. I had to struggle a bit to get out of my parents' grasp. Dressed in a pair of striped coveralls to match those of my father who was a gas station operator, I went forward to give my little self to Jesus.

The evangelist took me in his arms and held me up to the crowd as an example of "a little child should lead them." To his credit, he took me quite seriously. So did my parents, and it was to their credit for carefully teaching me Bible stories that I knew what I was doing—giving myself to Jesus. Not that I knew a great deal more than that, but my small feet were on the way. Even the adult disciples who had been with Jesus throughout his ministry had to be told that Jesus was the way.

My "place" is challenged

In the late 1930s and early 1940s, there was still momentum for foreign missions from the nineteenth-century missionary movement. It is not too surprising, therefore, that as a six-year-old I already felt called by God to be a missionary. When I talked about it, people thought it was "cute"—like my habit of sitting in the front pew during every church service, trying to soak up what the preacher was saying.

As a child, I didn't know how "cuteness" would plague me as an adult. As I grew older, it was no longer cute for me to enter into discussions about the morning sermon. After all, I was a girl, and in the eyes of our church and community, girls were meant for other things.

An uneasy ambivalence about my call began to develop. I was being conditioned toward home and family interests, and was gradually developing guilt and inferiority about my abilities in the world of ideas and public service.

While struggling to adjust to my first year of college, a young man became my friend. He informed me that he was going to be a missionary in India where he had grown up. He was honest enough to say that if our relationship had any future, I would have to be willing to go with him. That was fine with me, since it solved my problem of how to be both a woman and missionary. Our relationship developed, and we were married.

My husband and I went to India in 1960 with two daughters, and two years later a son was born. I don't regret in any way that my "mission" at that time was to care for and tutor our children. I taught our daughters in a bedroom-turned-schoolroom, furnished with desks and chairs made to fit them.

But I could never quite mentally adjust to the expectation that women ran the homes and men ran the mission. For one thing, it didn't seem right that single women who were each doing the work of at least one man couldn't even vote in the missionary council.

I found great refreshment in my relationships with single women, and my husband encouraged me to relate to them as much as possible. To me, there was a sense in which they were "real" missionaries, involved in the work in a way I couldn't be. They discussed issues and their involvement with nationals. Wives, on the other hand, often concentrated on the Three D's—diapers, disease, and disappointments with servants.

When we returned home from our first term in India, "cuteness" came back to haunt me. I expressed my ideas about the role of single women with some feeling to a mission administrator. He listened carefully but began to laugh. My face told him something was wrong. He explained that he wasn't laughing at the single women—he just thought it was "cute" for me to talk that way. But at 33 years old, I was not pacified. I began to see how "cuteness" was used as a wall to keep women in the outer court of the church and its mission.

Once it seemed that a door was opening in the wall. Our field administration appointed two women to the committee that allocated household furniture to missionaries. It was soon clear, however, that our position was more decorative than functional.

Reexamining women's roles in mission

It has taken me years to sort out the conflicting feelings about whether or not I was a "real" missionary. But like the women described in Elaine Sommers Rich's book *Mennonite Women*, my story is part of the history of God's faithfulness. Wonder of wonders for a girl growing up during and after World War 2, women now attend seminaries, and I have had the privilege of seminary study. Also, another woman and I are now serving on our denominational board of missions. God is good!

Several things have helped me reflect on my own missionary experience. One frame of reference is the theology of the kingdom of God in Christ learned from seminary studies and from Anabaptist history. Another frame of reference is the biblical feminist movement.

Kingdom thinking is more than counting conversions. The term *missionary* applies to all whose passports are stamped with the designation "in Christ." We are all foreign missionaries to every land, including the one in which we were born, because our citizenship is in the kingdom of God. Our work as citizens includes processing papers for immigrants as well as day-to-day operation of the country and care for its people. The King proclaims that our nationality will be clear to outsiders because of our love for each other (John 13:35). Kingdom life is not only

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Frances Hiebert, currently a member of Mennonite Brethren Missions/Services board of directors, lives with her husband, Paul, in Pasadena, California. The Hieberts served in India from 1959 to 1965.

preaching, teaching, or healing, but how we live together as members of the family of God. This is our witness of what the kingdom is about and why all persons are invited to enter it. All this has helped me see that my call to care for my family at a critical stage did not conflict with my call to missions.

The biblical women's movement within the evangelical church has been a great help, too. It calls the church to reexamine what Scripture teaches about women's roles in Christian ministry. Scripture points overwhelmingly to the fact that women are called to mission and ministry just as men are called. Western cultural glasses have distorted the Bible to conclude that God meant women to be quiet and cute.

The nineteenth-century missionary movement, where women comprised almost two-thirds of the missionary force, is one factor that has called Christians to question the accuracy of our Western lenses. What God did through dedicated missionary women, married and single, cannot be denied. They ministered by preaching, teaching, healing, educating, baptizing, and providing communion—often because men were not available or willing to carry the gospel around the world.

Once this was happening in foreign lands, church women in the West questioned their own responsibilities in the kingdom of God. First of all, they organized to support the women missionaries. They became active in the antislavery movement, the crusade for Prohibition, the suffrage movement, as well as in evangelism and church planting. Faced with the urgency and enormity of the task, these women, at home and abroad, had *No Time for Silence*, to quote the title of a recent book (Hassey, 1987). God rewarded their ministry with much fruit. Christian men and women began to question the interpretation of Scripture that kept women from putting their hands to the plow in the fields of God's kingdom.

There have been backlashes, of course, to this unleashing of God's gifts to women. But God's Spirit continues to strive with men and women. God's mission in the world may be deflected, but never defeated!

Mission and missiological terminology

As I look toward the future of Christian missions, I am increasingly concerned about deflection through "contextualization." This term, which so offended Bishop Stephen Neill's reverence for the English language, is the successor to terms that were in vogue when we first went to India.

Identification and *indigenous* were the important words in the 1960s. Accordingly, I went to India determined to turn myself into an Indian. Being somewhat on the fringes of strategy thinking as wife and mother, I was not aware that Eugene Nida and others had already discovered the impossibility of *total* cultural identification. I learned to wrap myself in a sari properly and to socialize with Indians, something that was not often done in our mission at that time. With all the beautiful brown faces around us, and because of my mind-set, I was sometimes shocked to look in the mirror and find a pasty, white face looking back at me—as if the bread had not baked long enough.

As time went by, I realized that I would always be a stranger in that culture. My husband was born in India of missionary parents. He was at home in the missionary bi-culture in a way that I would never be. Over the years, however, I have come to see the priority of my identity in the culture of the kingdom of God. Identification at that deep level supersedes all others. It is what overcomes all cultural differences, and is the hope for unity in the worldwide body of Christ.

Now the buzz word in missions is "contextualization." This is a broad term with variations of meaning. Does it mean making the gospel understandable? Or does it mean bending the gospel to the shape of the culture so as to make it easily acceptable? I have real difficulty with this second meaning, although I admit that my understanding of the gospel is not perfect.

Can the pendulum swing too far?

I believe the concept of contextualization should be limited to restructuring our *understandings* of the gospel. I cannot accept the idea that there is a different gospel for Muslims than for Hindus, Africans, or Americans. Certainly because of cultural differences, we will have different understandings of the gospel. We will have different questions about how the gospel addresses our own cultures. But the gospel itself is the Word of God in Jesus which remains the same no matter into how many languages and with how many errors we translate it.

It is fashionable to criticize the Western missionary movement of the last century for not contextualizing the gospel in other cultures. I understand the concern, but I also believe there is great danger of syncretism when the limits of contextualizing are not observed. That is nothing new; others like Stephen Fuchs, the Catholic missiologist, have warned of this danger. But it seems to me the pendulum has now swung so far that we need to be reminded of it again. I would even risk the observation that, rather than thinking that colonial missions were not willing to contexualize in other cultures, we should see them as being too contextualized in Western culture. Where we put the emphasis makes a great deal of difference, and points to a different option. Identification in the kingdom of God takes priority over the cultures of those sent or of those who receive.

Rather than reshaping the gospel to fit cultures, we need to allow our identity in the kingdom of God to help us listen to the understandings of our brothers and sisters from other cultures. In that kingdom where the only qualification is to be "in Christ," neither male nor female, neither Easterner nor Westerner, neither upper nor lower class has all the answers. We need each other to understand the full meaning of the gospel for all cultures. I am not saying, of course, that cultural difference should be denied or abolished.

As I see it, this is different from intentionally reshaping the presentation of the gospel so that it will not offend another culture or religion. Is it possible, in fact, that we Americans are concerned about offense not only because we want to see the penetration of the gospel into another culture, but because we cannot bear the personal rejection that may result from the offense? Are we so insecure that our concern is for our own acceptance as much as for the acceptance of the gospel?

Edward Stewart writes that Americans have a great need to be liked. Our need for acceptance is especially strong when we go overseas. We are deeply hurt when we are rejected. Paul Hiebert (1985:126) notes that this need to be liked frustrates our European missionary colleagues who feel that popular approval is a poor measure of success and that doing one's task well is its own reward.

It is true that we Americans live in a *stew pot* of different ethnic groups. But have we become so influenced by the secular advocates of cultural relativity in our age of pluralism that we are ashamed of the gospel? If so, we are as guilty of being too contextualized in our own culture as our missionary forebears ever were.

In the name of contextualization in a different culture, on the other hand, should the missionary be willing to give away any part of the gospel in order to make it acceptable? For instance, in evangelism to Muslims, should the gospel be shared only with men and not women because of their segregated culture? If Muslim men are converted, should they be encouraged to continue their practice of allowing only men and boys to participate in public worship? If so, what has happened to the gospel according to Galatians 3:28? Even more serious, in my estimation, is what seems the willingness of some Christians to give away the centrality of the redemptive work of Jesus in order not to offend the Muslim's understanding of monotheism.

We still bring "good news"

In my opinion, everyone loses when we fail to proclaim all of the good news. It is, after all, *really* the good news.

When women and men live together in the way that God intended, nothing but good will come of it. The mission enterprise blossoms when men and women work together in tilling the soil of the kingdom. Each sex has strengths that complement the other. God made it that way. In addition, the Spirit gave gifts to all; denying half those gifts makes the work much harder and is hardly good stewardship.

The strategy of really living out the gospel just may be as important as identification or indigenization or contextualization. May God help us to do it faithfully in all times and places.

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How My Understanding of Mission Has Developed

JOSÉ GALLARDO

When I first met Mennonite Board of Missions workers in Brussels, Belgium, my whole life was changed. I had been a student at a Catholic seminary, and had moved from Spain to Brussels to find a job. In that context I met MBM personnel working among Spanish migrants. The friendships that developed in that Belgian context helped me hear God's call to serve him.

Urgency

From Belgium I moved to Montevideo, Uruguay, to study at the Mennonite Seminary. I gradually gained deep insight into the needs of people. My first powerful experiences in missions were in a poor neighborhood outside Buenos Aires and in the forest villages near Santa Cruz, Bolivia. These experiences confirmed the urgency of proclaiming the good news to poor and suffering people and the social impact of the gospel. Not only were lives changed, but economic and educational levels were also improved. Later when I returned to Brussels, it was not so much material poverty that caught my attention, but the destruction of body and soul among prisoners, delinquents, drug addicts, homosexuals, prostitutes—and I was moved to care about and help them.

Power

I soon realized that I could not help these people through my own strength or theological training. Their troubles were deep; the forces that had driven them were powerful. Against such powers we need more power. Against spiritual powers of death we need the power of the resurrection and the Holy Spirit. My own experience of being baptized in the Holy Spirit encouraged me to move ahead in a rehabilitation ministry. Ten years have gone by. Many people have been delivered and are now serving God in various ways. It happened through prayer, suffering, and the fruits and gifts of the Holy Spirit. It couldn't have happened without the support of a caring community—of men and women giving their lives to God to minister in rehabilitation and reconstruction of broken people.

Community

Our church community openly receives outcasts in their homes, and nurtures and gives love to those who come to them through the rehabilitation ministry. These components are part of the strategy of God to accomplish miracles in many lives. The community's aim for these persons is not only to enable them to lead normal lives, but to become disciples of Jesus. This means finding places to live, people who care, jobs, and economic resources. It takes a disciplined life to be available to serve, literally laughing with those who laugh and weeping with those who weep. It means offering them not only food and roof but companionship as they find their way out of darkness.

Discipleship

There is a difference between believers and disciples. Here in Spain we see the differences very clearly. Everybody is a believer, most of them Christians. To become a radical disciple consecrated to Jesus in the way God intends is quite another thing. A good disciple teaches how to live by words and deeds. Above all else the new disciple must come to a holy, strong, committed life with Jesus, and must learn how to make disciples himself. Time is important, but experiencing how to apply the gospel in daily life is fundamental to disciple-making.

One of the most fulfilling fruits of discipleship has been to see young people coming out of drugs and prison and, after some years of companionship, becoming followers of God and leaders among the people of God themselves. Our first aim as missionaries must be encouraging those who sooner or later will take our place in ministry. That means dedication and clear goals of evangelism. It means not just to preach the gospel of salvation, but to form men and women for service to God, to their neighbors, and to the world. Evangelism is the starting point.

Evangelism

It was a significant step in my life when I realized that the gift of evangelism is also for me. Prior to that, I thought that because of my theological education I was primarily called to be a teacher. That was true. But I realized that I was called also to be a witness, a fisherman. And even though I have been called to bring the gospel to the outcasts, I realize that the gospel is for all kinds of people, young and old, from all social classes and different levels of education. A congregation is like a family with different ages and variety of professions. What happens in the rehabilitation ministry is that as the lives of young addicts change, their families have come to see Jesus as Lord of their lives, too.

Evangelism means going where the people are, in the streets, in the prisons, in homes, and even vacation sites. Evangelism is for everyone, not just the pastor or specialist. Through mime, theater, music, puppets, and other kinds of visual expression,

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José Gallardo and his wife, Carmen, participate in the Gamonal Fellowship in Burgos, Spain, where José preaches and teaches. José is also a leader in the Christian drug-rehabilitation center in Quintanadueñas, near Burgos.

we have touched many people and some have come to meet Christ as Savior.

Evangelism is not only talking about sin and salvation through Jesus. It is also caring for needs of the people who come to us. In many cases it was first through a social approach that persons have become interested in our faith and joined our spiritual family.

Social concern

Beyond the normal needs of food, clothing, and housing, we have the challenge of finding or creating jobs for people who have not previously held jobs or currently have no place in the job market. Contacts with prisoners also means visiting their families and caring for their needs. When prisoners are released they need jobs, and often nobody wants them. Often they have no place to go. One mother with her three-year-old daughter, Sonia, came to live with us when she was released from jail. She left to find a job and place to live, leaving Sonia in our home. Today, three months later, we have not heard from the mother, and Sonia is already calling my wife, Carmen, "mamy." In all these social involvements the church is ready to help. We realize that the social aspects of our mission are essential for understanding the gospel message. What we seek when we reach out to someone is conversion, a change of life. But often we have to start by being friends and offering a helping hand.

In fact, that is how the Lord touched my life in Brussels—through the help of the MBM-sponsored social service to migrant workers. That led to the formation of the Spanish Mennonite Community in Brussels. Several of us from that group received the call to serve God full-time. As a result, there are congregations in Barcelona and Burgos, Spain, with a home for the elderly and a drug-rehabilitation center at these respective locations. The vision of missions with social concern belongs to our Anabaptist concept of the church and its role in the world.

Future

No one can ignore the fact that world problems are increasing daily. Our mission must be bolder, stronger.

People see troubles everywhere and have a great capacity for absorbing and hiding their hurt. We need wisdom and creativity to raise awareness to the gospel message. The needs of the world will grow and people will discover all kinds of false solutions in their search for spiritual or material answers. Others will thirst for truth. New plagues, such as AIDS with its lack of cure, will prompt people to look for divine intervention. The harvest will be plentiful but laborers may be few. All aspects of life will be touched by physical, social, and spiritual diseases. And the answer is the same: Jesus heals, Jesus saves. Who will proclaim it with prophetic words and deeds? We need caring missionaries ready to pay the price. Every disciple of Jesus should be one of those.

In Review

Fire in Your Heart. By Sammy Tippit. Chicago, Ill.: Moody Press, 1987, 113 pp., $5.95 (pb)

Reviewed by Eldon DeFehr

This book needs to be read as much by the heart as by the head. The reader senses the fire that burns within this veteran missionary to Eastern Europe. Rather than offer quick-fix formulas, Sammy Tippit shares from personal struggles and intense spiritual confrontations how God has used him to evangelize and disciple effectively in communist countries.

While this book is largely autobiographical, the themes of the chapters deal with issues of spirituality—effective praying, power for witnessing, holiness, and overcoming apathy. The author's goal is to help the reader understand and experience genuine spiritual renewal. Tippit's chapter on congregational worship is also helpful.

As John MacArthur, Jr., notes in the Foreword, *Fire in Your Heart* calls American Christians to stop equating "hype and ballyhoo" with true revival, or from complacently thinking that serving God is meant to be a comfortable experience.

While renewal is the primary focus of this author, students of mission will draw out many helpful insights about evangelism in Eastern bloc countries.

Eldon DeFehr is an instructor at the Winkler Bible Institute, Winkler, Manitoba.

By Birth or by Choice: Who Can Become a Mennonite? By Martha Denlinger Stahl. Scottdale, Pa.' Herald Press, 1987, 142 pp., $5.95 (pb)

Reviewed by Leslie E. Mark

Martha Stahl is a member of Lyndon Mennonite Church in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, where her husband pastors. Mrs. Stahl is also author of the 1975 Herald Press book, *Real People: Amish and Mennonites in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania.*

The book consists of two parts with appendices. The first part asks the question, "Who can become a Mennonite?" It seeks to answer questions such as why other ethnic people join the group, what adjustments must be made by outsiders wanting to join, benefits which Mennonites receive from new members, and other related questions. The last chapter of the first section is written on how to become—of all things—an Amish.

The second part contains fifteen testimonies of people who became Mennonites by choice. Two appendices give a brief history of the Mennonites and Mennonite belief.

The book is written by a Mennonite for Mennonites from that particular point of view. The term "Mennonite" here refers exclusively to those of Anabaptist heritage who are unofficially called "old Mennonites" by other branches of the Mennonite movement. The beliefs stated in appendix two are those of eastern Mennonites and not of the whole body of Anabaptist descendants.

The opinion of one who is a "Johnny-come-lately Mennonite Brethren" (another tribe of the big clan) by choice is that the book could be improved by noting the different groups within those who classify themselves as "Mennonite." Most of us latecomers think they are all the same.

Personally, having come from a rather clearly defined behavioral and doctrinal theological position, I still find it difficult to realize that a number of "Mennonites" are pro-military, do not urge repentance and a responsible commitment to Christ as prerequisites to membership, and consider belief in the peace position tantamount to one of the many possible Christian persuasions. The ambiguity in these areas seems to arise from the nomenclature, however, and is not the fault of the author.

The book is worth reading, but for those who are outside the heritage, it will probably open a Pandora's box of questions and confusion. For the honest seeker, it is a book with which to begin the quest of who Mennonites are, as long as it is remembered that the Mennonites described here are only one group among many others who call themselves by that name.

Leslie E. Mark is interim pastor at College Community Church in Clovis, California.

A Chicano Theology. By Andres G. Guerrero. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1987, 186 pp., $11.95 (pb)

Reviewed by Juan Martinez

From the context of ethno-theologies and liberation theologies comes the challenge for the Chicano community to reflect on its unique religious experiences and to develop a theological framework from which to understand and share them. Andres Guerrero reviews some key themes from the Chicano religious tradition, particularly *La Virgen de Guadalupe* and *La Raza Cosmica*, reflecting on them through the eyes of several key Chicano leaders in order to develop an outline of Chicano theology.

The book offers some fertile themes for theological reflection. Guerrero's development of Vasconcelos' *La Raza Cosmica* draws on the unique Chicano (and Latin-American) experience of being mestizo. We have been forced to accept racial diversity and to create a new race, a fertile symbol of the new humanity in Jesus Christ. Guerrero sees a unique theological role for Chicanos as a bridging community between first and third worlds. We are the *piel* (skin) where the third world, particularly Mexico, touches the United States (p. 136). We suffer the pain of being a third-world people, but are also despised for living in the first world. Because we stand in the middle we can be a bridge between both.

Many may struggle with some premises drawn from Liberation Theology. But the most difficult issue for me is his use of *Guadalupe*. She is clearly at the center of folk Chicano Catholicism. As an extension and development of the pre-Columbian goddess *Tonantzin*, she is a symbol that ties Chicanos to their Native American past. But if she is placed at the center of theological reflection, is one then developing a Chicano Christian theology or a Chicano folk theology? The latter is a valid reflection for understanding Chicano religious experience, but any folk theology must be critically analyzed in light of Scripture to be useful in a strictly biblical ethno-theology.

Overall, Guerrero offers the free church tradition a serious challenge. Protestants in general want to evangelize Chicanos, but Guerrero is convinced that we are not ready to respond to the needs of this oppressed community (something we will be forced to do if enough Chicanos join our churches). To prove Guerrero wrong, free churches will need to review American church history from a Chicano perspective (as he does in this book) and recognize how different that history looks from the bottom up. It will also mean making room for Chicanos in free churches, not only as assimilated (or assimilating) individuals, but as a distinct people, who have a unique experience of oppression and who have an important contribution to make to the larger church. Though the book rambles at times, this is important reading for those who want to understand one issue the U.S. church must face.

Juan Martinez is Director of Hispanic Ministries for the Pacific District Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches. He lives in Inglewood, California.

The Humanist Christology of Paul (Vol. 3 of *Jesus of Nazareth Yesterday and Today*). By Juan Luis Segundo. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1986, 256 pp., $14.95 (pb)

Reviewed by John E. Toews

This book is volume three of a multi-volume work entitled *Jesus of Nazareth Yesterday and Today*. Volume one concerns methodology, volume two focuses on *The Historical Jesus of the Synoptic Gospels*, and the current volume deals with Paul via the Letter to the Romans (chapters 1-8).

Segundo's study of Romans is a Latin-American liberationist version of a Protestant interpretation of Romans. The exegetical base is the *International Critical Commentary* by W. Sanday and A. C. Headlam (1895) and C. E. B. Cranfield (volume 1, 1975). This narrow Protestant exegetical foundation is reinforced by a series of other Protestant perspectives on Romans: (a) the real theology of Romans is articulated in chapters 1-8; (b) the hermeneutical center of Paul is anthropology; (c) Paul is anti-Jewish in his basic theological stance and anti-law in his critique of Judaism; (d) righteousness in Romans means "to declare just" not "to make just," a distinctively Lutheran interpretation of Paul; and (e) faith in Romans describes human faith rather than the faithfulness of Christ, another very Lutheran reading.

The "liberationist" reading of Romans with these glasses produces a disappointing framework for interpreting Paul. As expected, the movement is from human sinfulness to faith in Jesus to salvation. One of Segundo's more significant contributions is the liberationist reading of sin as "power that enslaves" and as injustice that dehumanizes. His view of Judaism and the law is completely out of touch with the paradigm shift effected by E. P. Sanders and others since 1977. The salvation effected by human faith in Jesus is too weak to really free the Christian from the power of sin. God's victory over sin, law, and death in the resurrection of Jesus brings salvation and reconciliation. But it is a victory at the invisible level, not the historical level. And it is not powerful enough to heal the fundamental dividedness of human nature caught between intention and disappointing actual performance.

Segundo's own concern for an alternative reading of Paul and Romans that could serve the very existential needs of the Latin-American church would have been better served by a different paradigm for interpreting Paul. The work of Stendahl, Sanders, and Beker offer a more fruitful basis for addressing his concerns than the classical Protestant model.

John E. Toews is Academic Dean of Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary, Fresno, California.

I Will Do a New Thing. By Roberta H. Winter, Pasadena, Calif.: William Carey Library, 1986, 303 pp., $5.95

Reviewed by Galen Wiest

It is always exciting to read stories of how God works in our day. This book shares the vision of men and women who dare to dream and trust God to make it a reality.

I Will Do a New Thing is about the U.S. Center for World Mission. Written by Roberta Winter, cofounder of the center and wife of Ralph Winter, this is an updated version of *Once More Around Jericho*. Mrs. Winter shares the experiences of their vision for evangelizing the "unreached peoples" of the world. The vision led to the founding of the center for the purpose of strategizing, publicizing, researching, and training for this immense task.

This book is more than an account of the birth and growth of a mission organization. It tells of people who have sought to obey the task of reaching every man, woman, and child with the gospel of Christ. It recounts the experiences of people of faith as they struggled in prayer, engaged in spiritual battles with opposing cults, and frequently faced the point of financial collapse, only to see God intervene and display his might and power.

If you want to be challenged to step out for God, read this book. It will encourage, convict, and compel you to dream God's dreams and carry out God's tasks. You will be challenged to a life of prayer and a new perspective of what God is doing in world mission today and tomorrow.

Galen Wiest is a missionary in Colombia, South America, with Mennonite Brethren Missions/Services.

Confucius, The Buddha, and Christ: The History of the Gospel in Chinese. By Ralph R. Covell. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1986, 285 pp., $14.95 (pb)

Reviewed by Marlin Jeschke

"The concern of this book," says the author, "is to follow the trail of those who have looked for the key of faith in China," or as usually stated today in missionary discussion, about the *contextualization* of the faith in China. The author's interest in China grows out of 17 years of missionary service in both the mainland and Taiwan.

Covell's underlying assumption is that Christianity does not merit high marks for its record of relating the faith to Chinese culture. Western missions did not find the right code for translating faith effectively enough for the Chinese to feel this faith to be their own. And that is why Christianity never "took off" in China. Indeed, in his last brief chapter, "Rejection of the Gospel in Chinese," Covell says, "Over a period of nearly 1,400 years, with the possible exception of the present, no key has been found to open the door of the Chinese heart to the gospel of Christ."

And yet Covell hesitates to venture strong criticisms **or** commendations of practically all the Bible translations, educational approaches, preaching techniques, missionary publications, societies, or institutions that he patiently and even-handedly reviews. He seems to me to prefer the Jesuits over the Franciscans, and the Protestant "liberals" (as they would be labeled in some quarters) over the fundamentalist missionaries, yet remains remarkably neutral. Likely he himself found while a missionary in the Chinese world how dauntingly complex the indigenization of Christian faith can be.

The one fairly long chapter on Buddhism seems slightly out of place. Likely it was inserted to suggest or show that this other *foreign* faith did a much better job of getting indigenized and thus to ask what Christianity could learn from Buddhism. The one obvious observation is that Buddhism did **not** have a *foreign connection*. But I think Covell overestimates the impact and effectiveness of Buddhism in China. Buddhism's celibacy was and is too alien to China's love of family. In Japan that barrier got broken down by Shinran and Jodo Shinshu, and there Buddhism took root and flourished. No, Chrisitanity needn't envy Buddhism in China, because Buddhism faces even more discouraging prospects.

The comprehensiveness of this book is one of its chief merits. There is need for something more than Brown's popular history of Christianity in China, and this book offers it. But it comes off too rambling. The research is not sufficiently digested and reduced to more precise argument and clear statement of a case—unless Covell's case **is** that the *foreign connection* has been the biggest obstacle to the Christian message being owned in China. If so, the book should have directed itself much more toward that issue.

This book is a serious study. It is ambitious in attempting to cover the whole 1400-year stretch of Christianity in China from the Nestorians to the *Three Self* Protestant church in contemporary communist China. Its 250 pages are sprinkled with many quotations from specialized studies and even primary sources such as missionary periodicals in China during the height of Catholic and Protestant missions there. There are eight big pages of bibliography.

Marlin Jeschke is Professor of Philosophy and Religion at Goshen College, Goshen, Indiana.

Understanding Sectarian Groups in America. By George W. Braswell, Jr. Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman Press, 1986, 384 pp., $10.95 (pb)

Reviewed by Clarence Hiebert

George W. Braswell, Jr., is a scholar/writer whose extensive studies as historian, theologian, missiologist, and student of world religions has produced a useful book for persons interested in the pluralism of religious commitment in America. His thought style is not bombastic. He recognizes that it is important to see different religions "from within"—from their own writings and advocates. On the other hand, he is not nebulous about the issues of Christian faith and how to relate to Americans who have chosen another religious faith.

In his examination of 25 of America's religions, Braswell focuses on those which evangelicals have encountered most often on streets, airports, and through the news media. After introducing where one might meet them or how they show expression of their faith, he proceeds to give a brief summary of their historical origin and development, citing leadership, dates, and writings that are of greatest importance. A survey of their emphases and expressions of lifestyle follows. Finally, a sensitive appraisal is made about the positive aspects that one may note within these religious movements, why adherents tend to join and confess their faith in these systems, and how Christians might relate most meaningfully to them.

Braswell's approach is not that of a hard dogmatist. His analytic language is that of a careful, sensitive person, noted in expressions such as "it is reported," "they appear to," or "one senses that. . . ." His overriding concern is appropriate in noting how often the cause of defection to another religious persuasion came about because of deeply-felt vacuums in previous experiences or in relational breakdowns. Honest dialogue is a key to relating redemptively to the adherents of other faiths, done in the context of understanding one's own Christian faith, and with a sensitivity to the relational. If dialogue is to be useful, one needs to understand such religious systems and its adherents through a worldview that is appropriate to the person's *Sitz im Leben*.

This book was written for use in church groups and for classrooms where Christians seek to find meaningful ways of relating to those embracing other faiths. It is recommended for these situations. Those who want to delve into these religions more deeply will find this a helpful introduction for more intensive studies.

For those of us in the Anabaptist-Mennonite camp, this book is exemplary. We are sometimes classed among those regarded to be heretical because of our beliefs, and therefore as intolerable. In a war-ready world where "enemies" are persons to be destroyed, Anabaptist/Mennonites who see such persons as "loved by God" and therefore to be loved and pointed to Christian faith may well be regarded as radically wrong and unpatriotic. Braswell's relational and expositional style "fits" us.

Clarence Hiebert is professor of Bible at Tabor College, Hillsboro, Kansas.

Society and Politics in the Acts of the Apostles. By Richard J. Cassidy. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1987, 237 pp., $9.95 (pb)

Reviewed by Timothy J. Geddert

This book begins with a helpful summary of Cassidy's earlier work, *Jesus, Politics and Society*. There Cassidy argued that the Jesus of Luke's Gospel (a) was open and accepting of marginalized people in his society, (b) enjoined self-sacrificial service and generous sharing of material benefits, (c) promoted social justice and equality, (d) modeled forgiveness and nonviolent responses to aggressors, and (e) refused to practice unqualified cooperation with Jewish and Roman authorities without ever directly challenging their right to exercise political power.

The main body of the Acts book analyzes the social/political stance of the early church. It reveals strong continuity (also some surprising discontinuity) between Jesus and his earliest followers. On the one hand, Luke portrays that the early church operated "comfortably and even congenially within the framework of the Roman social order." On the other hand, Luke portrays the believers as withholding ultimate allegiance from the Roman order (p. 118). Cassidy demonstrates that the church posed a significant threat to Roman order, although it never intentionally sought to disrupt Roman rule or adopted an anti-Roman outlook (p. 121f.).

In two concluding chapters Cassidy challenges the widely held view that Luke was writing a political or ecclesial apologetic. The author advances Luke's purpose as an alternative "allegiance-witness" theory.

The central chapters are perhaps more detailed than necessary to make the case. The final two chapters about Luke's purpose may be unpersuasive for some. But all Christians seeking guidance on relating to their culture and political authorities will appreciate Cassidy's helpful analysis of the models of Jesus and the early church.

Timothy J. Geddert is Assistant Professor of New Testament at Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary, Fresno, California.

***Continuity and Change Among Canadian Mennonite Brethren*.** By Peter M. Hamm. Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1987, 278 pp., $29.95 (pb)

Reviewed by Robert Enns

Recent commentators on North American Mennonitism differ between the optimistic who see continuity and faithfulness and the pessimistic who see assimilation and accommodation. In his slightly revised dissertation published as *Continuity and Change Among Canadian Mennonite Brethren*, Peter Hamm views this denomination from the perspective of sociological theory and the vantage point of the mission secretariat in Winnipeg, one of the cultural centers of the contemporary Mennonite world. He sees vitality and viability. He is an optimist!

Hamm combines the church-sect and sacred-secular dichotomies which are familiar to sociologists into a "dialectic" model for interpreting the identity of Mennonite Brethren in Canada.

Introductory reviews of sociological literature related to religion and a brief historical survey are followed by the major contributions which the book offers. Part Three describes the "Sacralization of Identity," which occurs through delineating boundaries, enhancing cohesion, consolidating identities, facilitating socialization, and reinforcing integration. Part Four outlines the "Secularization Process," which involves education and relativization, urbanization, occupational change, vertical mobility, and assimilation and identity crisis. The Canadian Mennonite Brethren experience reflects a balance between these two processes. The book concludes that "it is this dialectic of integration and differentiation, expressed in the religious terms of sacralization and secularization, which accounts for the continued viability of Canadian Mennonite Brethren" (p. 256). This major thesis of the book is supported by a reanalysis of the "Church Member Profile" data collected by Kauffman and Harder in 1972 (*Anabaptists Four Centuries Later*). A new statistical analysis was applied to the responses from 359 Canadian Mennonite Brethren in the "Profile" sample. The book is a helpful addition to a growing body of social science literature on the Mennonite Brethren experience.

The value of the book is limited in that the sources and data utilized in Hamm's 1978 dissertation were not updated for this 1987 publication. The functionalist theory upon which the study is generally based and the body of data utilized both influence the optimistic conclusions which are reached. One does not find in this book the sense of crisis in spiritual and cultural identity which characterizes some more recent statements, conferences, and symposia.

Is the glass half full (and continuing to fill as a healthy dialectic contributes further to growth and vitality) or is the glass half empty (and leaking because the vessel is perforated by assimilation and accommodation)? Perhaps both the theoretical model and the social location of Hamm near the center of a Canadian Mennonite Brethren heartland contribute to his optimism. The view is not so sanguine from other vantage points closer to the margins.

Robert Enns is Professor of Sociology at Fresno Pacific College in California. He has also been missionary, teacher, and researcher in Japan.

***Teach as He Taught: How to Apply Jesus' Teaching Methods*.** By Robert Delnay. Chicago, Ill.: Moody Press, 1987, 128 pp., $5.95 (pb)

Reviewed by Nadine Friesen

The author of this book states that "the goal of our teaching is to make disciples." Jesus set the pattern for teaching as he taught by defining the kind of person a teacher needs to be and the methods that enable discipling to take place.

The process of becoming a teacher like Jesus requires a lifetime and a consistent personal commitment to one's own spiritual nurture and growth. Unless students can see Jesus in the lives of their teachers, teachers cannot expect growth in those taught. Taking specific examples from Jesus' life and teaching, the author describes the Christlike teacher in terms of commitment, dependence on work of the Holy Spirit, and genuine concern for the spiritual well-being of one's students. There are suggestions on how to encourage students, and when and how to confront them.

The premise of *Teach as He Taught* is that the methods used by Jesus are still valid in teaching situations today. Illustrations from the Gospels identify ways to get and keep students' attention. Suggestions for presenting material clearly and in a manner that arouses curiosity and desire in the student to search further are also included. Lectures and questions used by Jesus are covered as well.

Content is another significant part of the teaching process. Again the author draws from Jesus' model to help the reader determine what needs to be included in a biblical teaching plan and what does not.

The general topics covered by Delnay are not new, but he has a fresh approach in looking at them very specifically from the perspective of Jesus and the way he taught. The reader is reminded that the ministry of teaching is a great privilege and responsibility. Jesus provides the example to follow.

Nadine Friesen is Director of Christian Education at the Hillsboro Mennonite Brethren Church in Hillsboro, Kansas.

***Case Studies in Missions*.** By Paul G. and Frances Hiebert. Grand Rapids, Mich: Baker Book House, 1987, 264 pp., $11.95 (pb)

Reviewed by James Wenger

The Hieberts have put together a book containing 62 case studies from around the world covering different situations or events. The use of case studies as a teaching-learning technique is widely used in schools of law and business in North America.

Organized under ten headings, the case studies deal with a wide range of mission-related problems: idols and ancestors, women and men, traditional customs, sickness and death, finances and bribery, loyalty to church and state, and everyday problems of missionary life. Each begins with a helpful introduction. The Hieberts gathered the studies from various sources, with one-third coming from India and Africa and the rest from other world cultures. No single solution is offered to these actual life problems.

Directives are given on how to teach and participate in case studies. They are well suited for preparing missionaries to face situations they will find on the field. The authors suggest that local churches use them to learn more about the missionary enterprise. Congregations needing clear-cut answers will not feel comfortable, but those who can tolerate some ambiguity and discussion where everyone may not always agree will find the approach invigorating.

Baker Book House states that copies may be made for class use without prior approval, providing 35¢ per case per student is sent to the publisher.

James Wenger, formerly a missionary in Japan from 1966-1975, is currently pastor of Mennonite Community Church in Fresno, California.

***Strategies for Church Growth*.** By C. Peter Wagner. Ventura, Calif.: Regal Books, 1987, 213 pp., $7.95 (pb)

Reviewed by John P. Schmidt

This book is not mere theory. Drawing heavily on years of studying and lecturing on various aspects of church growth, Wagner takes some basic concepts espoused by his mentor Donald McGavran and presents them in popular style. This approach challenges the reader to think through such things as planning, harvesting, soil testing, and the meaning of mission and evangelism. The author argues that planning strategy is not incompatible with the sovereignty of God.

Wagner debunks the criticism of numerology, showing that God's concern both in Jesus and Paul is that numbers are important. God wants everyone saved. The shepherd leaves 99 in search of one lost sheep. Wagner also argues convincingly that mission means giving primary emphasis to the evangelistic mandate without neglecting the cultural mandate; he cites examples of church growth where that happens and church decline where it does not. While many will disagree with his conclusions, we need to consider carefully what he says. He also continues the debate about 2-P versus 3-P evangelism, stating clearly that persuasion must be included with proclamation and presence to be true evangelism. As Anabaptist Mennonites we should have little to dispute with him on this matter.

While this book articulates well the position of church growth strategy, it really presents little Wagner has not written previously. Thus it falls short of the flyleaf comment: "It brings together for the first time many principles of evangelism and missions which have proved, through recent research and experience, to be effective in implementing the Great Commission."

There is an unfortunate mixup of pages, which hopefully will be corrected in a later edition. Pages 184-185 should follow page 181. Also, one is left feeling that the final chapter, rather than drawing the entire book together, launches in a new direction, dealing with the vast topic of worldwide needs. Instead of focusing on strategies it deals more with need, and therefore seems incongruent with the thrust of the book. Yet I highly recommend it to those wanting to understand the bedrock thinking in church growth strategy.

John P. Schmidt is Academic Dean at Columbia Bible College in Clearbrook, British Columbia.

***Building the House Church*.** By Lois Barrett. Scottdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1986, 175 pp., $8.95 (pb)

Reviewed by Henry Wiebe

Lois Barrett, a mentor and teaching minister of five house churches in Wichita, Kansas, writes about positive experiences people have had in house churches. She is convinced of the benefits of a small congregation of 10-15 people.

The book's strength lies in its practical approach to such subjects as worshiping with a small group, meeting the needs of children, sharing your gifts, exercising church discipline, and managing conflict. There is an excellent section on what it means to covenant together and to be accountable to each other as members of a church family. The section on "growing" could include a stronger appeal for evangelism.

Two chapters may be of particular interest to a wide range of readers. The chapter on "Decisions" clarifies what it means to operate by consensus in a church. Barrett lists seven helpful steps on how to restore understanding if the church has already polarized over an issue. The second chapter of general interest is on "Gifts." This section could be profitable as a group study by the leadership team of any church or by an adult Bible study or Sunday school class. The definition of "shepherding" is a must for pastors, elders, and deacons.

The final chapter is probably the most practical. It answers the question, *how does a house church begin?* The author raises some honest concerns and suggests how to deal with them when starting a house church or a cluster of churches. Each chapter ends with a very helpful section of "Reflection and Action." Those considering a house church or those already in one will find help in assessing their ministry program.

Building the House Church should be read by anyone considering alternatives to the larger conventional church organization and by church planters hoping to build a house church from their nucleus of believers.

Henry Wiebe is a pastor from Clearbrook, British Columbia, currently on study leave at Trinity Western University.

***Evangelical Witness in South Africa*.** By Concerned Evangelicals. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1986, 48 pp., $3.95 (pb)

Reviewed by Donald R. Jacobs

At last the South African charismatic evangelical voice is heard. When the now famous Kairos Document was issued in 1985 by 150 theologians who met in Soweto, the evangelical "right wing" was pressed to state its position. They met several times between September 1985 and June 1986 to produce this Statement. Since the charismatic evangelical movement is very strong in South Africa, this Statement has special significance.

It deals with seven areas of concern: (1) the tendency of conservative theologians to be conservative in politics; (2) the tendency of evangelicals usually to support the status quo by appealing to Romans 13; (3) evangelical blindness to sin as practiced in political and social structures; (4) the perplexing claim by the maintainers of apartheid that they are "evangelicals"; (5) the lack of cooperative spirit among the evangelicals; (6) the frustration of a political system which hinders evangelism on the basis of race; and (7) the need for critical self-analysis in view of the non-radical stance of evangelical Christians.

It calls for a stance which is, to my mind, every bit as radical as the Kairos Document. For instance: "Born-again Christians must always be dissatisfied about the world, and with existing orders or systems. They must challenge the status quo at all times. They must not be static but they must be dynamic in the direction of radical change. We believe that God, through Jesus Christ, is calling us to salvation, to a radical change of our lives, and therefore, to a radical change of structures of our society" (p. 30).

The Statement concludes: We call upon all committed evangelicals in South Africa to come out boldly to be witnesses of the gospel of salvation, justice and peace in this country without fear. . . . We have to take a stand now even if it may mean persecution by earthly systems. For if we fail now we shall have no legitimacy in the post-liberation period unless we want to join the hypocrites of this world" (p. 45). That is dynamite!

Donald R. Jacobs is Executive Director of the Mennonite Christian Leadership Foundation, Landisville, Pennsylvania. He and his wife previously spent 20 years as missionaries in Kenya and Tanzania.

Editorial

Quite often I am startled by what ancients thought and said. Each generation nurses the illusion that it stands in a superior position to all earlier generations, and that its present perspective is the correct one. Our understanding of human experience is bound to change if we listen in on debates of earlier times and places.

For example, it is illuminating to see what themes preoccupied those who attended the Liverpool Conference on Missions in 1860. This was one of the earliest international missionary conferences. Each of the seven days included a major address leading to a minute action. The addresses were followed by extensive discussion, and the total proceedings are preserved in a conference volume.

Notice what topics were treated in 1860: European missionaries abroad, the means of exciting and maintaining a missionary spirit, missionary education, support of missions by the sending constituency, native agency (i.e., the role of indigenous peoples in the development of a church), recruitment of qualified missionaries, native churches. In 1860 the term *native* was used in a positive and non-derogatory sense. Interspersed with these main addresses were speeches on female education, medical missions, the Indian mutiny of 1857, and missions in particular regions.

The concern among the 1860 conferees was that missions should not impose a certain structure on new churches. On the one hand, they observed that the New Testament does not offer a blueprint that is binding on the church in all times and places. On the other, they noted that many of the hotly contested points of polity in the West were peculiarities to a certain moment and had no meaning to other people. It was recognized that ecclesiastical forms must reflect the cultural preferences of a people with "entirely different habits and thoughts, produced by widely different circumstances." Indeed, why should we "compress them into moulds of forms and rules which every day is showing us are no longer considered to be altogether suitable to our own churches at home."

A number of speakers expressed great discomfort over the denominationalism which marked the church landscape in the West and which fit new churches like Saul's armor. A strong appeal was made for Bible translation to be done by native speakers rather than outsiders.

The heart of the debate in these sessions was how to use external agencies and staff to bring into being a church authentically Christian and authentically indigenous to a particular culture. It is the timeless question phrased in the idiom of a particular historical moment, and one that every would-be developer must grapple with.

For example, one perplexing problem in 1860 was the training, calling, and support of pastors. It was agreed that a missionary should not function as pastor. Something happened, they felt, that made it almost impossible for a local person to assume leadership once a missionary held that role. The missionary tendency was to encourage a "too dependent" state of mind. "Self-reliance, independence in thought and action, and administrative ability, cannot be developed and flourish in the face of this depressing influence." Speaker after speaker urged that churches and leaders be set free to become self-reliant. Contemporary examples of such self-reliance argued in favor of cutting the missionary apron-strings.

One of the strategies used by missions in that period of history was creating Christian villages. Because new converts frequently faced intense persecution and ostracism, their solution was to gather these folks into enclaves where they would be protected. The Liverpool delegates roundly criticized this approach because it kept these new Christians from being leaven in their society. The delegates charged that such a strategy "creates a new caste" and leads to withdrawal from society rather than vigorous witness within and to society.

Thus the development debate was well under way more than a hundred years ago. The terms of reference have obviously shifted, but the essentials remain largely unchanged. Today we are more concerned about the way powerful blocs oppress and exploit weak blocs, for in our world these economic, political, and military systems exert great influence. Yet much remains to be done at the local and individual level in giving hope and encouragement.—Wilbert R. Shenk

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FOCUS

Neo-Paganism

ROELF KUITSE

Paganism

The word "pagan" is derived from the Latin word *paganus.* The original meaning of this word referred to "a person who lives in the countryside." Christianity started as a city religion, which is why the word pagan got the religious connotation of being non-Christian. In *mission* circles the word was generally used for people of tribal religions, giving the word a negative, derogatory connotation. *Theologically* the word points to a view of life not based on God's revelation in Israel, in Christ, as recorded in the Bible. Paganism is a temptation for Christians. The temptation is to base life on the natural data of human existence, which seems so much easier than the acceptance of God's grace, making paganism a resistance against God's grace.

Neo-paganism

The Italian scholar Sabino Acquaviva uses about thirty different words to describe the crisis of Western culture. Two words often used are *secularization* and *neo-paganism.* The view behind the first word is that modern life has become desacralized. The other word, neo-paganism, points to the phenomenon of resacralization. We can discern in our time not only a process of desacralization, but also a process of resacralization. One of the main theses of Jacques Ellul's book *New Demons* is that attempts to destroy religion only result in a new religiousness. "One of the most remarkable general phenomena of our time is that by which the desacralized universe becomes sacred through the very fact of being desacralized" (Ellul, 1975:58).

Europe

The church on her way in Europe encountered the paganism of the classical culture (Greece, Rome) and the paganism of Germanic and Celtic tribes. West-European culture is rooted in three traditions: the Judeo-Christian tradition, the classical tradition, and the Germanic/Celtic tradition. In the Middle Ages there was a kind of synthesis between these traditions, the Christian tradition being the dominant force. After the Middle Ages the synthesis broke down. In Renaissance and Enlightenment there is an emphasis on the classical tradition. The eruption of the Germanic tradition in National Socialism sacralized—again—the powers of blood and soul, race and nation.

Christian Europe?

The Roman Empire was succeeded by the Christian empire. Christianity was the desacralizing power in the Roman Empire.

Christianity became the resacralizing power in the new empire, creating a new order where everyone could find a place and security, as long as the teachings of the church were not resisted. Altar and throne, faith and reason, grace and law, supernatural and natural forces, the theocracy and autocracy were blended.

The Christianization of the people was in many cases superficial. Force was used to make people Christian. It was regarded as self-evident to be Christian in a world dominated by Christian rulers. In this way many pagan views and practices were preserved and incorporated in the life of the community. Jewish scholars speak about Christianity as it took shape in Europe as an accommodation to pagan culture. This Christianized paganism became alienated from its roots (Israel) and reacted against its origin in a deadly hate (anti-Semitism).

Was Europe really Christianized? Or was/is it a myth to speak about a Christian Europe during the Middle Ages? Some dream about a "new Middle Ages," a new era in which the church plays a central and dominating role. Others emphasize that the future of the church will be that of a minority, facing again the forces of (neo)-paganism.

Enlightenment

The synthesis of the Middle Ages collapsed. In the Reformation emphasis was put on the biblical tradition (*sola fide*). In the Enlightenment the classical tradition and heritage was stressed (*sola ratione*). The Enlightenment became one of the important roots of modern culture. A few characteristic features of the Enlightenment are:

Belief in human reason

The Greeks moved from "mythos to logos," from a worldview based on religious images to a worldview based on human thinking. Europeans should, according to philosophers of the Enlightenment, move in a similar direction: from a worldview based on Christian revelation to a worldview based on human reason, from *sola fide* to *sola ratione.* Science should be the leading star, the saving power in human life. The force that desacralizes (human reason) becomes the force that resacralizes, creating a new order as a point of orientation for human beings. Science becomes for many the name of a new god.

Belief in nature

Human reason does not need faith to find "enlightenment." In a similar way nature does not need grace in order not to be corrupted. Life should be lived according to nature, based on natural laws disclosed by science. 'Nature and nature's laws lay hid in night. God said: Let Newton be and all was light" (Pope quoted by Newbigin, 1983).

Nature is seen as the source of truth, virtue, and happiness.

Roelf Kuitse, originally from the Netherlands, directs the Mission Training Center at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries, Elkhart, Indiana.

There is in the era of enlightenment a lot of talk about natural law and natural religiosity. This natural religiosity is not found in Christianity. The religions of Chinese and Muslims are regarded as religions closer to natural religiosity than Christianity.

There are different views in regard to nature. To some, nature is the supreme revelation of God. Others regard nature as the highest reality. Aesthetic views (the beauty and harmony of nature) can be found next to vitalistic, amoral views (de Sade, Hobbes). Basic to all the views is the idea that what is natural is right. "One truth is clear, whatever is, is right" (Pope).

A resacralization takes place: the data of the natural realm are absolutized (naturalism).

Belief in progress

A better world will be the result of a life guided by reason. More schools, more education will lead to less prisons, less crime. A new world of happiness will be created by human beings. History is the human domain, not the divine domain. Religion cannot contribute much to the coming of the new era. This secularized form of the kingdom of God found expression in liberalism as well as in communism.

Belief in God?

During the Enlightenment a belief in God survives. It is, however, a deistic view of God—a god withdrawn from the world to leave room for human beings and their acts, a god who does not act contrary to human reason, contrary to nature, a god who in his providence has given humankind the capacities to make progress. This God is seen as the guarantor of the moral and social order. It is the *Dieu gendarme* of Voltaire, who takes care that Voltaire's table silver is not stolen by his servants.

It is understandable that in many cases this deism ends in atheism. The God hypothesis is no longer necessary for science. And morality can also do without God. Reason can teach how to act, what to do. And God as the guarantor of the moral and social order is also rejected, after it becomes more and more clear how repressive that social order is and how immoral Christians often act. Karl Marx opened the eyes of many people to the distorted views of reality.

Belief in humankind

The autonomy of the human person is emphasized. Human reason is the guide leading to happiness. Human beings are good. Evil comes from society, from certain religious views (doctrine of original sin).

If we take as our definition for paganism a view of life which is not determined by the revelation of God in Christ, then we must conclude that this important period in the history of Europe—the Enlightenment—was influenced by pagan notions. It is understandable that people influenced by the Enlightenment often reverted to the ancient pagan roots. "Homerus is our Bible, not those Jewish scriptures." "The freedom of the spirit of Hellas should guide us, not the religion of fainthearted slaves." "Christianity is a strange phenomenon in Europe."

The end of an era?

Several eras are coming to an end in our time, like the agricultural and the Constantinian eras. The same can be said to a certain extent in regard to the era of Enlightenment. The belief in *reason* is not unchallenged. Philosophical as well as political movements in our time have stressed and still stress the irrational forces in human life. In the so-called "Eastern Renaissance" new levels of consciousness are sought, beyond human reason. There is a revival of all kinds of mysticism and occultism (astrology).

Ellul gives many examples in chapter five of the above-mentioned book. In regard to *nature* three things can be said. In the first place, there is among many an alienation from nature, caused by the new technological world created by man. Second, a minority cling to a kind of nature-mysticism as a reaction against the technological world. They appeal to the healing power of nature. Third, many are the adherents of a kind of vi-

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talism—life for life's own sake; enjoy life, savor it down to the last morsel! Eros is worshiped as an isolated, independent force. The promise of continuing *progress* has not been fulfilled. The optimism in regard to the future has been replaced by pessimism and doomsday-thinking. History has not gone in the right direction; instead, history has gone astray. If there is no future, then the alternative is to enjoy the present, in a material sense (consumerism) or in a spiritual sense (turning away from history in mystical experiences). Or, there is the possibility, in a cult of violence, to destroy the institutes deemed responsible for the present situation.

In regard to *belief in God* it can be said that the majority of people do not deny the existence of God. This God, however, does not mean much for daily life. This is a distant, far away God. There are not many theoretical atheists; there are many practical atheists. The Dutch theologian Miskotte wrote a book about the Old Testament: *When the Gods Are Silent.* The gods are silent because of the Word of God heard by Israel. When this word is not heard anymore, then the voices of the gods are heard and obeyed again—Eros, Apollo, Dionysius, Mars, Krishna, Brahma, etc.

Chesterton once said, "The result of not believing in God is not that one will then believe nothing; it is that one will believe anything." The *belief in humanity*, in the autonomy of the human being, in the human being as creator of history is tarnished. Copernicus taught that the human person is not the center of the world. Darwin came with the message that the human being is not unique. And Freud told us that we are not ruling in our own house, that we are products of unverifiable forces and events. And in our own days we experience that we are not the master of things, that anonymous authorities are ruling and manipulating us. We don't shake, we are shaken (*Kafka*). That leads to a mood of resignation, of asking no more questions, or to rebellion, "sacred" violence.

A heap of broken images

Paganism has been in one way or another part of European history in its different periods. Paganism remains a continuing temptation: to move away from the God of Jesus Christ to absolutized fragments of the created order; to rebel against the God of grace by putting human trust in what is at the disposal of humans in the created order.

The eclipse of God in the lives of many has led to an absolutizing of what belongs to creation. Our time has been characterized as a *Goetzenparade*, a parade of gods, idols. It seems to be difficult for human beings to live without absolutes. Or, to say it in the words of the Russian philosopher Berdyayev, "The human being is indestructibly religious." If God is not worshiped, then gods fill the vacuum created by the eclipse of God, gods with different names, different faces.

The church in Europe finds herself in a new situation—a situation in which it is not sufficient to repeat the words of the "old-time religion." The Bible has to be read again in the light of the new situation, especially the Old Testament, which tells us much about the struggle between the God of Israel and the gods. Renewed confrontation with the message of the Bible will lead to critical self-examination; this self-examination will disclose how often the church has been influenced in her thinking and acting by pagan notions. Renewed confrontation with the biblical message, in the light of a situation characterized by words like *secularism* and *neo-paganism*, will also help to find new words, new images to interpret God's Word to people who know, in words from T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*, "only a heap of broken images."

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Europe As Mission Field? Some Socio-Historical Reflections

PAUL PEACHEY

The decline of Christian practice in Europe since the nineteenth century has led some observers to declare this ancient citadel of the faith a "mission field." The concept of "mission fields," of course, hails from another era, another context, when missionaries from Christendom set out to other lands, other continents, beyond the bounds of Christendom, to win them for Christ. Today, however, multitudes of people in the very lands once collectively described as Christendom appear to be out of touch with the gospel, indeed to be newly pagan. The spires of the Gothic cathedrals that once dominated the cityscapes of Europe are vastly overshadowed by the pinnacles of a secular industrial civilization.

At first blush this suggestion seems plausible enough. The imperative to witness "in season and out of season" is built into the gospel. Wherever there are people without the good news, "the fields are ripe to harvest." The spiritual void in Europe appears acute enough to remind one of the vision that motivated Europe's first missionary: "Come over to Macedonia and help us." Yet given its presuppositions, to apply the term "mission field" and to proceed accordingly is profoundly problematic, particularly when it is invoked by Christians from outside Europe. To assert that Europe was once Christian but has now effectively reverted to a non-Christian state entails sweeping judgments about the meaning and progress of Christianity that are hardly self-evident. How *Christian* was Europe then? How *pagan* is it now?

Paul Peachey teaches part-time at The Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C., and participates in the Rolling Ridge Study Retreat Community at Harpers Ferry, West Virginia.

Fundamentally, however, these questions are important and urgent in their own right. In fact, to address them only in terms of mission strategy may well be to miss their fundamental importance. The second half of the great commission in Matthew 28 (working out the import of the gospel) has perhaps always been more difficult than the first (its simple announcement). This is surely the case in our time when the proclamation is prostituted by mass media "hype" and the language of the gospel reduced to clichés. In any case, this brief paper will deal with the prior question, and will leave to others the judgment as to whether Europe should be described as a mission field.

Christian mission: deracination or paganization?

As the Yale historian of Christianity, the late Roland Bainton, pointed out, Christian missions confront a methodological dilemma. To pursue the path of "individual conversion with a goodly period of instruction prior to baptism" entails a change in which the converts become "deracinated from their own culture" and move into "an alien conclave." "Mass conversion," on the other hand, with kings embracing the faith followed by the masses whether freely or coercively, risks "the paganizing of Christianity." Whereas the former prevailed in the era of modern Protestant missions, the latter dominated in the "Christianization" of Europe (Bainton 1966:I, 147).

The claim that Christianity came to Europe by mass conversion needs to be qualified. Initially, the faith spread by other means, above all through intrepid missionary monks. Without their labors, the way for mass conversion by royal example and decree would hardly have been paved. Yet in the end, evangelism was absorbed into the processes of civilization building. Over a number of centuries, king after king embraced the faith and used its resources to extend and consolidate his rule, from Armenia in the East through Bulgaria and Hungary to the Franks and the Angles in the West. And what they embraced was a Constantinianized version of the faith in the first place.

The 1988 commemoration of the millennium of Christianity in Russia is a vivid reminder of the process. It is the "mass conversion" under Prince Vladimir of Kiev that is being celebrated rather than the heroic instances of witness and individual conversions that preceded under persecution. The decision to accept baptism, however, was political. Vladimir headed a fledgling state, surrounded by a variety of threatening powers—Muslim, Roman Christian, and Byzantine Christian. To unite his people and to surmount the incursion of other monarchs he, too, needed a religion. So he sent emissaries to various royal courts to assess the several options. The Byzantines, it turned out, presented the most dazzling spectacle. Moreover, a political alliance yielded a princess as bride. Accordingly, Byzantine Christianity became the choice and the visual sumptuousness of Russian Orthodox liturgy a fateful result (Poppe, 1982).

Constantine, the fourth century (306-337) Roman emperor, may be taken as the progenitor of the mass conversion model. Constantine embraced Christianity, and started it on the road toward a state religion. Historians debate the motivations and quality of his conversion. A recent survey of the evidence stakes his engagement with the faith with some seriousness (Fox, 1986). But whatever his personal predisposition, *raison d'etat* prevailed in his policy. Even so, his policy was more measured than that of some successors. Though favoring the spread of Christianity, Constantine tolerated the continuation of pagan cults. Only late in the fourth century under Theodosius I was paganism proscribed. On balance, the fourth century saw a startling transition as Christianity passed from a *persecuted* to a *persecuting* position in society. Inevitably this change meant a mutation of the faith, some people claim for the better, but in the words of Bainton, its paganization.

Of what precisely did this paganization consist? Obviously it meant the incorporation of many pre-Christian beliefs and practices into the Christian corpus, as well as the perpetuation of pagan motifs under an imposed "Christian" veneer. Indeed some modern non-Christian writers maintain that the pagan substratum survived the Christian era (Seznec, 1961; Szczesny, 1961). But George Mendenhall (1973), a profound Old Testament scholar, provides a more penetrating insight. Mendenhall draws a parallel between the introduction of the monarchy in ancient Israel and the Constantinian era, calling King David the "Old Testament Constantine." Indeed he extends the canvass to include a similar readaptation of the original message of Zarathustra (7th, 6th century B.C.) by the later Achemenids. "All three cases are entirely analogous," he writes, "illustrating (to put it as provocatively as possible) *the dissolution of religion* into politics. At the same time, the basis of solidarity was no longer the covenant, but the myth of descent from a common ancestor" (Mendenhall, 1973:16f., emphasis added).

What does *the dissolution of religion into politics* entail? Mendenhall acknowledges the difficulty of the problem. "Large social organizations *seem* at least to be absolutely necessary to support a large population, but large social organizations rapidly tend to become intolerable to the populations, the real persons whom they dominate and whose well-being they effectively determine, whether for good or evil" (p. 219). Deity in the prophetic tradition, however, is manifest not in exhibitions of political power, as in the ancient monarchies surrounding Israel, but "in the qualities of personality." Under the Hebrew covenant, the kingdom of God:

> There was no delegation of power to a centralized political system. The deification of productivity (fertility cults) and power were rejected in favor of an ethic . . . based on the ability to predict the consequences of behavior and to avoid patterns of behavior which create conflict. The rejection of ethic, then, is rejection of peace. This is precisely what happened with the reestablishment of the monarchy under Kings David and Solomon, and the consequences were similar to those of the Late Bronze Age monarchies . . . toward the end the Old Testament prophets reaffirmed the predictive validity of the ethic—a state which sacrifices ethical obedience for temporary gain must be destroyed by God Himself. This is the gist of biblical prophecy: *it was reaffirmed by Jesus Himself*' (p. 224, emphasis added).

The reaffirmation of Jesus, of course, is the critical variable. The Hebrew prophets, beginning with Samuel, stood in an ambiguous relationship to the monarchy. Room was made under the circumstances for the royal office within the covenant, as long as it embodied its ethic. The history of the Hebrew monarchies and their eventual destruction, however, confirmed the prophetic misgiving. With Jews now in dispersion and thrown back on the covenant, on the one hand, and the clear position of Jesus that his rule is "not of this world," what grounds remain for "the dissolution of religion into politics," for the use of Christianity to build or to maintain political power?

Despite the absence of a biblical or theological foundation for the political embodiment of the faith, after Constantine Christianity advanced in Europe as civilization. In fact *Christianity* eventually confronted, not as witness but as the power of *Christendom*, as the "fellowship of professedly Christian nations considered as a unity" (Temple, 1936). (Though the two terms, Christianity and Christendom, are sometimes used interchangeably, the Oxford dictionary permits a distinction between them—the former as religious, the latter as civilizational.) Meanwhile the dominant churches—"established" in Europe and "main line" in the U.S.—at least until recent decades espoused the conception expressed by Temple as normative. As late as 1936, for the second time in the twentieth century, a journal named *Christendom* was established in the U.S. and Britain. The editor *pro tem*, Charles Clayton Morrison, then also editor of *Christian Century*, editorialized in the first number that "the goal of civilization can be nothing less than, literally, a Christendom." The new journal rejoiced that "the Christian church is coming alive once more to the supreme responsibility of Christianity in civilization." No inkling, it seems, of Christendom's pagan underpinnings!

The secularization of Christendom

If Europe was less than *Christian* then, how *pagan* is it now? Is secularization the problem? Has Christianity in Europe declined to a point where it has become a "mission field" anew? For decades, the concept of secularization assumed an almost axiomatic status, in both religious and social science thought. In both worlds of discourse it seemed self-evident that modernization, the concatenation of revolutions, scientific, technological, industrial, political, and the like, that since the eighteenth century are remaking the human world entail the decline of religious faith and practice. But whereas religious leaders for the most part deplored this decline many, perhaps most, social scientists greeted it. In a 1966 monograph on religion Anthony F. C. Wallace, a well-known anthropologist, wrote that "the evolutionary future of religion is extinction . . . as cultural trait, belief in supernatural powers is doomed to die out, all over the world, as a result of the increasing inadequacy and diffusion of scientific knowledge . . . the process is inevitable" (Wallace 1966:264f). Religion, it was argued, is in effect an *accidental*, not an *essential*, element in human existence.

It must be recognized, of course, that secularization by whatever term we view it is a complex phenomenon, profoundly embedded in the social process. Here I shall briefly note three forms in which we meet it: first, secularization as the shift of human endeavor from "religious" or otherworldly to "secular" or this-worldly auspices; second, secularization as the embodiment or institutionalizing of "spiritual" values in the forms of culture; and third, secularization as the "disenchantment" of the world by the gospel.

Before proceeding it will be helpful to locate the decline/revival concept on our psychological and intellectual maps. It is important to recall the fact that decay and renewal appear as perennial motifs in human experience. We are somehow inclined to compare our present situation unfavorably to any earlier, more ideal time. In our own time, we hear frequent complaints over the loss of community. It is assumed there was a time, perhaps when our grandparents were young, when families and community were warm, intimate, and loving. Now we are isolated, fragmented, insecure, and alone. Nostalgia for an unrecoverable but more ideal past appears so generally in human consciousness, irrespective of time and place, that it may well be inextricably rooted in our existence. Perhaps we always long for the innocent security of the womb, of infancy, and childhood that life in the world thereafter increasingly takes from us. That yearning may even resonate in the biblical account of Eden and the subsequent Fall.

In some respects, complaints over the secularization of our society is an example of this mood. The verb "secularize," in scholarly use since the sixteenth century, is an important variation on this theme of paradise lost. The term is Latin in origin (from *saeculum*), denoting an age, a generation, an era, and eventually, a world (order). In Latin Christianity, a distinction was drawn between the "secular" and the "regular" clergy. The former served in the "world," as pastors, teachers, and the like. The latter were the monastics, subject to the rules (*regula*, hence regular) of the orders. In medieval times, in the absence of stable societies, monasteries assumed many "secular" duties, both economic and political. Over the centuries they became increasingly wealthy, holding large tracts of land. But temporal possessions, power, and political intrigue inevitably imperiled their spiritual mission.

The resulting corrosion of monastic integrity contributed to the coming of the Protestant Reformation. Thereupon, in territories that became Protestant, monastic lands were "secularized"—that is they were taken over by governments and placed under "secular" (as distinguished from religious) control. Whatever its moral or legal ramifications, that transfer came to be defined as "secularization." Recalling this early usage makes concrete a vastly complex and at times elusive phenomenon. Thus most commonly, secularization refers to the transfer of an object or activity from religious to nonreligious, i.e., "secular" or this-worldly auspices.

Similar examples abound in our own time. Many colleges and universities in the United States were established by churches. As these institutions grew and developed, however, they became increasingly subject to the dynamics of the academic enterprise and less and less responsive to the control or the values of the churches that established them. Similar trends can be discerned in church-established hospitals and other eleemosynary institutions. Indeed the tendency or "law" appears broader. Once an idea or a vision is embodied in action, in practice, in institution, it becomes increasingly subject to impulses that do not necessarily resonate with the originating vision. Analogous changes on a personal scale can readily be documented as well. Individuals, under the impact of modern life, "lose" their faith. That experience is frequently reported among university students, particularly when they have come from sheltered families or communities.

Sociologists, observing these processes, have offered a different account. Secularization, they show, is linked to the processes of social differentiation. As populations grow in number and the division of labor advances, social interactions and institutions become more highly differentiated and specialized. Specialized workers, formally organized in factories, greatly outproduce individual craftsmen who must master many skills to produce a complex artifact. Industrial specialization is linked to specialization among institutions such as family and school. Families surrender certain economic and educational functions to other institutions, for example, but then specialize more intensely in other areas such as psychological support for family members. Similarly, education and care of the sick, once the province of the church, are now the turf of "secular" professions, techniques, and institutions.

Specialization, however, by its very nature means "secularization." Why? Because when tasks subdivide into specialized operation, technical procedures and rules emerge that are beyond the reach of the common morality of everyday life. Every occupational or industrial specialty has its own technical rules, rules that derive from the operation itself. Moreover, practitioners of many occupational specialities organize as professions which by means of "peer review" assert the right to be self-regulating. A patient reacts positively or negatively to handling by a surgeon, and all too often patients have reason to complain that hospital procedures slight them as persons. But as laypersons, patients are hardly qualified to judge their surgeon's professional competency. Only other surgeons are able to do that. The same principle reaches into virtually every sector of our social existence. In a word, the "community" dissolves into many normative subsets of relationships, and "secular" reason eclipses the commonly shared code of conduct in numerous details of living. For religious faith, by which definition is inclusive and unifying, such fragmentation can only be problematic and "secularizing."

Secularization as value institutionalization

The virtues of hard work and thrift are frequently referred to in our society as examples of the "Protestant ethic." The term used in this manner apparently derives from a classic if controversial study published early in this century by Max Weber entitled *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism.* Weber, impressed by Karl Marx's demonstration of the force of the economic factor in human affairs, felt nonetheless that ideal factors—beliefs, values, ideas, and the like, had independent consequences. Struck by evidence that scholars had accumulated that Protestant and Catholic societies differed in their economic behavior, he undertook an extensive exploration of the sources of these differences. This book was the result.

The argument cannot be detailed here. Basically, Weber concluded that the Protestant principles of the believer's individual and direct access to God and the religious value of secular vocation unintentionally generated the motivations, the energies, and the disciplines required by the modern industrial economy. These values, in time, were so deeply assimilated in the culture that they became self-perpetuating, no longer dependent on the originating religious impulse.

During the 1930s a young American sociologist named Talcott Parsons, eventually a towering figure in the discipline, introduced Weber's work in the United States. Parsons later was to challenge the notion of secularization as simply "a progressive decline in the 'religiousness' of the society and culture. . . ." That definition, he argued in an essay on Christianity in modern industrial society, is unidimensional, embracing only the "other-worldly" dimension of religiosity. Mere other-worldly religiosity renounces activity in the world in favor of "mystical contemplation and purely spontaneous acts of love." But following Max Weber, Parsons emphasized that Christianity includes an "inner-worldly" focus as well, that is, "an orientation to mastery over the world in the name of religious values" (Parsons, 1963). The "inner-worldly" thrust of Christianity is manifest, Parsons argued, in the "institutionalization" of values in the culture. This thrust, in effect, counterbalances the course of secularization of beliefs and practices that indeed may occur. Christian values are perpetuated in the culture even when the faith is no longer explicit.

These observations can be extended. Secularization may properly be defined negatively as decline or loss of otherworldly or supernatural energies. But secularization can also be seen positively as the translation of otherworldly vision into innerworldly actions. Secularization, thus conceived, has an incarnational quality. In some domains, however, the vision may dissolve in its cultural embodiment. When a goal is realized, the vision or ideal that constituted the goal of action disappears. For example, when in 1920 female suffrage became constitutional in the United States, much work remained to be done. But an organization campaigning for a constitutional amendment to allow women to vote had lost its reason for existence. Parsons apparently viewed the "institutionalization" of Christian values in the culture in such terms.

But we can go further. Not only have Christian values, such as respect for human dignity, been institutionalized, but paralleling the "secularizing" trends that we can readily identify, there are also "sacralizing" processes at work. Old religious forms may decline, but new ones continue to emerge. Avowed atheism is a genuine human option, sometimes chosen. That choice can be defined as a "religious" act, if religion is defined as a response, negative or positive, to the possibility of God. One can also be on the lookout for idolatrous substitutes, especially when disguised. But generally speaking, in the long run "religion" is simply a human given. "Secularizing" and "sacralizing" impulses commingle in human societies. This awareness has now reasserted itself among sociologists (Hammond, 1985; Stark, 1985). The bush Moses saw in the wilderness burned but was not consumed.

Christianity as source of European secularity

Finally, it must be noted that in Jewish and Christian revelation, the sacred itself secularizes. On this point, too, Max Weber's work was of seminal importance. Biblical monotheism, he observed, "disenchants" (secularizes) the world, breaking the taboos of animistic faiths that inhibit human intervention in nature (Gerth, 1958). The "Protestant ethic" as an innerworldly ethic exemplifies this consequence. The biblical revelation of the Creator who transcends the world he creates and places the human as steward in nature frees the world for human action. Biblical faith is thus a powerful "secularizing" energy. Indeed, part of the "paganization" entailed in the mass conversion described above, at least in the conversion of Europe, was the abortion of the secularizing process. Animistic and polytheistic beliefs and practices were incorporated in Christian observances. The argument of agnostic critics who view Christianity as an imposed veneer on the European spirit has some validity.

Where does this take us?

To assume, then, that Europe was once Christian but is so no longer, I conclude, is a simplistically distorted picture, inadequate as the basis for a "mission field" response. But what would constitute a valid grasp of the European Christianity? That, presumably, has yet to emerge, though, of course, we are not privy to divine counsel in the matter. I will hazard two further observations, first regarding the place of "Constantinian" Christianity in salvation history, and second regarding W. A. Visser 't Hooft's view of "neo-paganism" as the problem in Europe.

Christianity as a facet of political control is nowhere and in no way anticipated in the gospel. Yet for more than a millennium following the Constantinian era, it prevailed in this form. To this day we have not fully recovered from the resulting distortions. How do we fit such a detour into biblical eschatology? Above we noted the parallel that George Mendenhall has drawn between the Constantinian era and the rise of the monarchy in ancient Israel. Though we must allow for great differences in historical detail, phenomenologically the parallels are convincing. The same perennial human "needs" energized the two compromises.

Does the response of the Hebrew prophets to the rise and failings of the monarchy suggest a solution to our problem? One of the mysteries of the God of the Hebrews is the covenant constancy whereby God, remembering "that we are but dust," is willing to work with second- or third-best solutions. Indeed, in the case of the monarchy, which is pictured as clearly not the original intention, it is conceded to, and then as principle, even incorporated into the fullness of the messianic figure who was to come. This logic is extended in the increasing individualizing of responses apart from social contexts. "The soul that sins shall die." Much later in the new covenant, Peter learns through a charming experience that "in every nation any one who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him" (Acts 10:35).

Compromise—if this is the proper term for the divine accommodation implied here—has its risks. We quickly embrace, and then assume as principle, whatever exists. Clearly in the Old Testament instance, the monarchy did not define the spiritual frontier of prophetic concern. That boundary lay elsewhere. Faithfulness within and under the monarchy was honored when it occurred, and penalized when it did not. In that regard, the monarchy was irrelevant.

Do these precedents offer us clues whereby to come to terms with the Christendom and its legacy? Can we thus enter into and celebrate the legacy of faith and creativity bequeathed during the reign of Christendom, that flourished in spite of, and sometimes in conflict with, the perversions of Christendom? Can we respond to the new possibilities and responsibilities arising from the demise of Christendom? Can we be alert to the wonderful ways in which God can turn to good account all the errors of Christendom?

Secondly, W. A. Visser 't Hooft's treatment of Europe's "neo-paganism" offers important clues as well. Visser 't Hooft, the respected first executive of the World Council of Churches formed in 1948, was part of the theological revival linked to the name of the Swiss theologian, Karl Barth. He belonged thus to a generation of scholars and churchmen who appreciated anew the discontinuity between human endeavor and the divine initiative in the biblical faiths. In an age confused about the possibilities of human progress, that discontinuity needed recovery. All the advances of civilization will not alter the basic human equation of finitude and fallenness. Visser 't Hooft was aware, nonetheless, that the doctrine of creation in Christian thought needs more fulsome development.

"Pagan," in Visser 't Hooft's usage, derives its meaning from "primitive" cultures in which people are variously polytheistic and animistic in their beliefs and practices. Various natural phenomena are worshiped and appeased as divine. Fertility cults flourish. Religion is essentially idolatrous.

What then is "neo-paganism" and how does it arise? One can read Visser 't Hooft in terms of the older, unidimensional secularization of theory. Christendom has declined, and a return to paganism is the result. But clearly more is implicit in his analysis. Viewed in terms of the history of ideas, the crisis now experienced by everyone was anticipated by intellectuals and writers a century or two ago. Beyond this, our grasp can be enhanced by sociological and social historical analysis. The processes of social differentiation, briefly outlined above, bring all of us in the modern world into a new relationship to the vital urges which Visser 't Hooft sees expressed in Europe's "neo-paganism."

Consider the following. In traditional "societies," where human existence is immersed in the solidarities of kinship and place, life is lived in a relatively homogeneous human circle. In the modern era, as noted above, most of our experiences occur in separate special purpose "groups" that often do not overlap. Moreover each such group has its own expected behaviors. Individuals move selectively among varied settings, assuming correspondingly varied identities. Thus the cafeteria of possible activities among which we chose is constantly extended. The result is a kind of paradox. Because we are tied to greater numbers of specialties we become less and less self-sufficient. But by the same token, the sphere of personal discretion enlarges. As a result the impulses that well up within ourselves are less and less tied to institutionally defined responses. The right course of action is less and less measurable by objective standards, shared by everyone. Accordingly, behavior becomes a matter of what "feels" right.

Neo-paganism, then, is in this form a revival of nature-worship. It is "a thorough-going vitalism which seeks the intensification of life rather than its transformation" (Visser 't Hooft, 1977). Admittedly, the problem arises in part because of the mishandling of the biblical doctrine of creation by Christians. But in the end, neo-paganism in the modern context is an instance of the swept room in the parable of Jesus. The processes of modernization, including secularization, have swept the modern world. We are free as never before, but now exposed to seven spirits replacing the one of whom we have been rid (Luke 11:24-26). In this context, what does evangelism entail?

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North American Mennonite Agencies in Europe Since World War II

ROBERT CHARLES

"The Return"

From the arrival of the group of Krefeld Mennonites in Germantown in 1683 to the end of the nineteenth century, the movement of Mennonites between Europe and North America was one-way traffic. With persecution, famine, conscription, and war providing the push and the promise of land, religious freedom, and no military service supplying the pull, more then 15,000 Mennonites (Unruh 1952:7-8) from various European lands made the westward Atlantic crossing—aided by Dutch Mennonites and by those who had already emigrated—to settle in North America.

Two devastating wars in the first half of this century led to further European Mennonite resettlement in the Americas. However, largely as a result of and in response to these two conflicts, two-way Mennonite traffic across the Atlantic was set in motion with the "return" (Martens 1971:121) to the Old World of significant numbers of the descendants of those who had sought refuge in North America.

This twentieth century "return" has been characterized by a diversity of motivations, goals, organizational sponsorship, and geographical destinations. Few Mennonites, to be sure, have migrated back to Europe. Increasing numbers have been going as tourists. Not a few have gone as students (the importance of European study and research in the "recovery of the Anabaptist vision," beginning with Harold Bender's year in Germany in the early 1920s up through the "Concern" group of the 1950s, can hardly be overemphasized). Many have gone as war relief and reconstruction workers and as missionaries, under the auspices of the Mennonite Central Committee and a half-dozen Mennonite mission boards. They have returned to countries in which historic Mennonite communities are established, to others from which they have long disappeared, and to yet others where they never previously existed.

Focus

This article focuses on what is arguably the most significant aspect of this "return‘: the work of North American Mennonite agencies—Mennonite Central Committee and various mission boards—in Europe since World War II.

The European work of the agencies and their attempts to define and coordinate efforts among themselves and with European Mennonites will be treated narratively up through the end of 1950. This will be followed by a summary account of how this work and coordination, both among themselves and with European Mennonites, has evolved up to the present.

While a summary of North American Mennonite overseas outreach over the first half of the century has been done (Gingerich 1965) the overall story of their involvement in Europe since 1945 has yet to receive a full-length synthesis. Various agencies have produced accounts of their European activities in all or portions of this century (Martens 1971:121-134; Unruh 1952; Miller 1985:256-265; Wenger n.d.) and all have been faithful in producing annual reports, study documents, and other materials to keep the archivists busy.

Hopefully the broad strokes with which the early postwar years are being sketched out here can someday be applied to the entire postwar period, and can be followed up with the finer, detailed strokes that alone will do justice to the story, its participants, and its issues.

Before 1945

In response to World War I, the Mennonite Relief Commission for War Sufferers (MRCWS) was organized in 1917 to channel funds and personnel to Europe as well as to the Near East (Unruh 1952:41-55; Gingerich 1965:268-270; Schlabach 1980:124-127; Hershberger 1970:235-243). Working in cooperation with the American Friends Service Committee and with close but no clear ties to the Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities (MBMC), the MRCWS helped to support more than fifty Mennonites in reconstruction work in France and to send relief supplies to southern Russia.

At the urging of a delegation of Mennonites from Russia to create an inter-North American Mennonite program of famine relief for the Ukraine, the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) met in Elkhart and Chicago in 1920 to organize relief committees of various Mennonite groups and a relief program was undertaken.

The Spanish Civil War in the late 1930s brought response from the Eastern Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities (EMBMC) and the Mennonite Relief Committee (MRC), set up in the 1920s under MBMC. In 1937, the MRC sent workers to distribute relief supplies under the auspices of the American Friends Service Committee. Although other workers were sent and interest was expressed in establishing mission work in Spain after hostilities had ceased (Unruh 1952:42), no distinct Mennonite work materialized. In the spring of 1940, these MRC workers went to southern France to work among Spanish refugees from the Civil War.

Following the outbreak of World War II in September 1939, the MCC Executive Committee approved plans for relief work in Europe on the condition that its eight constituent bodies would pledge their support. By November six groups had given favorable responses and M.C. Lehman was sent to Europe to investigate relief possibilities.

In his November 15, 1939, letter of instruction to Lehman, MCC Executive Secretary Orie O. Miller stressed that "relief is to be extended without preference to race, nationality, or otherwise, with particular attention to relief needs among war-suffering women and children. In case, of course, that there should be relief needs among the Mennonite folks of Europe, these should also receive prior consideration" (Unruh 1952:4). His instructions noted also that all efforts should be carried out in cooperation with Benjamin H. Unruh, a German Mennonite with whom the MCC had worked during the 1920s to relocate Russian Mennonites to Paraguay. Relief work began in Poland in the spring of 1940 and continued until the U.S. entry into the war in December 1941.

At the end of December 1939, the MCC Executive Committee asked Amos Swartzendruber, an MBMC missionary on furlough from Argentina, to go to France and England to inves-

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Robert Charles served in Belgium from 1980 to 1988 with Mennonite Board of Missions, directing Brussels Mennonite Center and pastoring the Spanish Christian Community of Brussels. This article grows out of a presentation given to the European Mennonite Missions Consultation in June 1986.

tigate relief needs. His mission in early 1940 led to MCC involvement in Marseilles up until late 1942 and to the sending of two workers to England to meet needs aggravated by the war.

By 1944, a director of European relief and ten workers were based in England. At this time "the general feeling seemed to be that the most needy areas in Europe were not yet accessible but would eventually open up" (Unruh 1952:52). As the war came to a close in the spring of 1945, those "most needy areas" did begin to open up. By the end of 1947 work in England had been phased out completely; all the MCC action was now on the European continent.

1945 to 1950

North American Mennonite work in continental Europe in the first five postwar years was, with few exceptions, under the auspices of the Mennonite Central Committee, of which sixteen groups were members by 1944 (Kreider 1970:246). Efforts were concentrated on providing emergency relief in the form of food and clothing, on processing and resettling refugees, and on rebuilding destroyed structures. As the victorious Allied armies were demobilizing, the personnel and material resources of a wide range of North American Mennonites were being mobilized largely by MCC for responding to need "in the name of Christ."

In 1945, MCC work began in France in March and in the Netherlands in July; in the following year it extended to occupied Germany. By 1947, activities and distribution of relief supplies were reported in seven other countries: Denmark, Belgium, Switzerland, Austria, Hungary, Poland, and Italy (Unruh 1952:102-123, 144-164).

"It was a response to need and also a response to the biblical injunction to 'feed the hungry and clothe the naked.' It was further a response arising out of our understanding of brotherhood that when one part of the body suffers, all suffer," wrote Peter Dyck, who played an important role in these efforts, looking back thirty years later. "Was MCC invited to come to Europe? Yes and no. When your neighbor's house is on fire you don't wait for an invitation to get involved" (Dyck 1979:1-2).

Yet MCC's presence in Europe was not simply the result of unilateral North American Mennonite action taken without regard to their European brothers and sisters. During the negotiations for the opening of relief work in the Netherlands, there had been contacts with Dutch Mennonites, who had indicated that they would welcome MCC relief efforts in their country (Dyck 1979:2; Unruh 1952:112).

If relief work was the prime expression of MCC work in Europe during this period, it was not the only one. The MCC Peace Section, sensing the time was ripe for taking up theological and social-ethical issues, sent Harold S. Bender to Europe from June 1947 to August 1948 "to strengthen our Mennonite peace testimony among the Mennonites of Europe." Bender's program included the organization of peace institutes and conferences and the promotion of peace literature. Out of the conferences and contacts an International Mennonite Peace Committee was formed. From June 1949 to August 1950, Guy Hershberger was in Europe studying the peace movement and establishing contacts with the other peace churches and the nascent World Council of Churches (Lapp 1970:292-294).

One exception to the MCC "monopoly" on North American Mennonite agency work in Europe during this period was Belgium. In mid-1945 the Mennonite Relief Committee (MRC) of Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities (MBMC) contacted MCC about making provision for relief work in Belgium that the MRC could administer under overall MCC administration. MCC agreed and, following an exploratory mission by the MRC chairman, a three-man team that had been processed by MCC arrived in Belgium in early 1946. A reconstruction unit, similar to ones already functioning in France and the Netherlands, was established in eastern Belgium in April 1947. The MRC Belgium unit continued until September 1950, when the Missions Committee of MBMC took over responsibility from MRC for continuing work in Belgium and the first missionaries arrived (Unruh 1952:128-132).

This switch within MBMC had been in gestation for several years. In 1947, a *Report of the Belgian Mission Study Committee* had been presented to the annual meeting of MBMC. The five-member committee indicated that they had considered mission work in both Germany and Belgium, but had decided that Germany "is not within the range of present possibility," and that German Mennonites "may not fully appreciate an evangelistic work within their territory by a foreign branch of their denomination" (MBMC 1947:33-34).

Among the committee's seven conclusions were the following: (1) "We owe a positive, evangelistic testimony to Europe, the continent which produced our forbears." (2) "Belgium furnishes us with the most strategic and likely location for the beginning of missionary effort in Europe," (3) "It is urged that the General Mission Board prepare itself for this task at the earliest possible time, *so that the mission effort in Belgium may capitalize to the full upon the relief effort of that country* (italics added). Approval for work in Belgium was given at the 1949 annual meeting, and the first missionaries arrived the following year.

From Relief to Mission

The program transfer which took place in Belgium was indicative of a larger transition taking place in North American Mennonite agency work in Europe in the early 1950s: the shift from emergency aid to spiritual and institutional reconstruction, from "relief" to "mission," was on.

Theologically this posed no major problem for most North American Mennonites, for whom announcing the gospel was not to be separated from a concern for the social and material welfare of persons being evangelized. But the shift did require new organizational self-consciousness and patterns of working together. North American Mennonite agencies found themselves needing to consider basic questions such as: did they now wish to capitalize and build on the considerable achievements of the MCC relief for further work? If so, where? And how could these efforts be coordinated among themselves? How could this work be done in coordination and increasing partnership with European Mennonites?

It is not surprising that the first question was quickly answered in the affirmative and that the Mennonite relief programs in Europe would be examined for the opportunities they might provide for permanent Mennonite missionary efforts, as the case of Belgium demonstrates.

This idea was not a postwar inspiration. Already in 1942, the MBMC Missions Committee had stated that "our present peace testimony in the form of relief work should result in the opening of a great door and effectual in the way of conducting mission work in Europe and Asia." In its report the following year, the committee stated that "inasmuch as we look to relief work as the possible beginning of permanent mission work, it is our concern that the utmost care be exercised in the choice of personnel so that the impacts made in the work will be Christian and truly Mennonite and will pave the way for the opening of permanent missions. It should be expected that from the relief workers should be chosen some of the permanent mission workers. This conviction was conveyed to our Relief Committee as well as to the Mennonite Central Committee" (Hershberger 1951:165-166).

Mission Interests Grow

This interest in starting mission work in Europe, however, was not limited to MBMC nor to Belgium. MBMC was also looking at England, where an MCC volunteer had stayed on after the closing of MCC work with an interest in mission activity. At the 1948 meeting of MBMC, a recommendation was accepted from the "London Mission Study Investigation Committee" for "the opening of mission work in London when suitable personnel is available" (MBMC 1948:40).

The mission board of the Conservative Amish Mennonite Conference (later to be known as Rosedale Mennonite Missions, RMM), which had supported an MRC unit in Poland in 1948, was interested in beginning work in that country. Though by 1950 it was clear that Poland was out, their vision for work in Europe was also developing (Miller 1985:256-257).

In 1947, the EMBMC appointed Isaac Baer "for service in Europe, to be supported by the Eastern Board and lent to MCC for relief service until a mission could be opened." Baer visited the Netherlands, Hungary, and France in 1948 and 1949. In March 1950, EMBMC decided to begin a mission in Luxembourg, where Mennonites had "welcomed their offer of spiritual help and assistance"; several months later, EMBMC and RMM had agreed to make this a cooperative effort (Wenger n.d.:1-3).

At the June 1950 meeting of the Virginia Mennonite Conference, "it was moved and passed that this conference look with favor on the opening of mission work in Sicily and that the Mission Board . . . be authorized to proceed with the work as the Lord opens the way" (VCM 1950:322). Later that year a cooperative agreement between the Virginia Mission Board and MBMC would be established for mission in Italy.

The Mennonite Brethren were developing interest in Germany, where again a former volunteer had stayed on after the closing of MCC work; by 1950, a Mennonite Brethren congregation had emerged (Martens 1971:124-125).

The 1950 Study Mission in Europe

To address the basic questions of "post-relief" strategy and to facilitate the transition taking place in North American agency work in Europe, an itinerant North American Study Mission was organized in Europe between July 29 and August 14, 1950, at the initiative of the Executive Committee of the Mennonite Central Committee.

The group was composed of four members of the MCC Executive Committee and the chairmen or secretaries of six North American Mennonite mission boards: General Conference Mission Board, Mennonite Brethren Mission Board (later to be known as BOMAS), MBMC, EMBMC, RMM, and the Brethren in Christ Mission Board.

Four members of MCC Europe staff also joined the group, which spent two very full weeks visiting most centers of MCC activity in Europe. Members of the Study Mission met with Mennonite leaders in France, Switzerland, Germany, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg (SMD 1950), but at no time did they have a joint meeting in one place with all these European Mennonite leaders, nor were any European Mennonites part of the Study Mission. Two of the stated goals were "to review North American groups' interests in Europe and report findings, conclusions, and any recommendations; and to review overall continuing MCC program in Europe, with report of findings, suggestions, and counsel to MCC and to the groups" (SM 1950:1).

The major policy issue which the members of the Study Mission were asked to address clearly focused on the continuing activities of the initiating agency: "The task which MCC should set itself as an agent of relationship to Mennonites in Europe, now that an extensive material aid program to German war sufferers would cease to be the primary ground for the presence of MCC in Europe" (Yoder 1967:8). Yet also underlying the MCC invitation was "the assumption that the mission boards were the proper channels for planning church extension" (Shenk 1986:4).

The report of the Study Mission began with observations and findings on MCC-European Mennonite relationships. These included: (1) "Uniform appreciation and gratitude was expressed for the help which the American churches have brought through the agency of MCC." (2) "General recognition was evident of the new bridges which have been built between the American-European brotherhoods, and strong request was made not to remove them"; (3) "There was a recognition among the European Mennonites, varying with the different conferences, that continued help is needed so far as to broaden the vision and strengthen the purposes of our European brethren"; (4) "There was some scattered opinion that the European churches were not always adequately informed of the intention and program of the MCC" (SM 1950:2).

The twenty-seven recommendations at the end of the report affirmed a continuing role for American Mennonites across Europe along a wide front of activities "beyond material aid." MCC was asked to assume the primary responsibility for linking all North American Mennonites and the established Mennonite churches of Europe: it was to have an "ambassador function" (Yoder 1967:16). This was seen as a "spiritual ministry to the European Mennonites" in areas such as "youth work, Christian education and materials, ministry to refugees, Bible schools, peace witness, etc.," to be done in growing consultation and cooperation with European Mennonites.

But the report also recognized that "MCC does not serve the specific missionary interests of its constituents" and that "the constituent groups of the MCC should be recognized as having freedom in working in non-Mennonite parts of Europe. Groups contemplating work in such areas should be encouraged to counsel and advise with the MCC for any help and suggestions the latter agency might be in a position to give" (SM 1950:4-6).

Further Developments: MCC

What were the consequences of the Study Mission for the activities of North American Mennonite agencies in Europe?

The new chapter in MCC activity, which the Study Mission had helped to define and ratify, would be "characterized by deliberate interaction and cooperation between MCC and European Mennonites resulting in the establishing of settlements in Germany for refugees . . . a Bible school, a publishing house, Mennonite Voluntary Service, Eirene. It was a time of cautious optimism, of deliberate reconstruction of much that had been destroyed physically and spiritually."

In 1957, another phase began, "one of consolidation and searching for new and better structures of working together" with European Mennonites, to be followed by a fourth period beginning in 1967 during which MCC reassigned its "ambassador" to Europe to the home office in North America and in which "MCC's involvement can be described as cordial but not intensive, with MCC ready to cooperate . . . but not taking initiatives" (Dyck 1979:7-8). In 1979, a fifth phase in MCC work in postwar Europe was inaugurated at the Thomashof Consultation with the consensus that "it would be desirable to have an MCC representative stationed in Europe, thereby facilitating contact between European conferences and agencies and MCC. In further development of cooperative efforts, the sending of a European to MCC in North America is to be considered" (TC 1979:2).

Further Development: Missions

Of the mission boards participating in the 1950 Study Mission, only one—that of the General Conference, later known as the COM—would not subsequently send personnel to Europe under their auspices over the next four decades. (The COM would, however, second workers to work under MBMC in France beginning in 1976.) Some of the appointments would be in partnership with other North American Mennonite mission boards, others conjointly with MCC. Some of the projects would follow on the heels of postwar relief; many of the projects would be in cooperation with various emerging European Mennonite organizations.

Following its initial project in Belgium (1950), Mennonite Board of Missions began work (i.e., by sending North American personnel) in England (1952), France (1953), Spain (1975), Ireland (1979), and Sweden (1983). Rosedale Mennonite Missions began work in West Germany (1950) and in Luxembourg (1951). Eastern Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities began work in Luxembourg (1951), France (1954), West Germany (1957), and various countries of Eastern Europe (1970s). BOMAS began work in West Germany (1950), Austria (1952), Spain (1976), and Portugal (1986). Brethren in Christ Missions began work in England (1987).

Several mission boards or interest groups not on the 1950 Study Mission would also become involved in Europe: Amish Mennonite Aid began a work in West Berlin in the 1960s that later became independent; the Board of Missions of the Evangelical Mennonite Conference of Canada began work in West Germany (1975); the Missions Interests Committee of the (Beachy) Amish Mennonite Church began a project in France (1982) that was subsequently transferred to Belgium (1986).

Further Consultations

The 1950 Study Mission had shown itself to be an appropriate instrument for moving "beyond relief," and similar events would mark subsequent transitions in program, interagency relationships, and cooperation with European Mennonites.

A one-day meeting was held in August 1957 at the European Mennonite Bible School in Switzerland with representatives of MCC, MBMC, EMBMC, Mennonite Publishing House, and Mennonite Broadcasts. Two concerns recurred in the conversations among the North Americans: "the first was that these agencies should have better means of coordination.... The other concern was that American agencies made their decisions without adequate consultation with the European churches or decided what they needed without them" (Yoder 1967:15).

Sensitivity to this latter concern was reflected in the invitations to the Europe Mission Study Conference held July 18-21, 1967, which was also significant because the initiative for calling this meeting was taken by EMBMC and MBMC. Among the 42 conference participants were nineteen European Mennonites representing five different conferences, four different mission associations formed to partner with EMBMC and MBMC, and two projects working in partnership with MCC. North American agency participation (North American-based administrators and European workers) included ten from EMBMC, five from MBMC, four from Rosedale Mennonite Missions, three from MCC and one from the Virginia Board. Two background study papers were presented by MBMC staff; the bulk of the conference, however, was taken up with reports on the activities and concerns of all the organizations present.

The half-dozen conclusions of the conference pointed to the growing complexity of interagency relations between MCC and mission boards in Europe, to the challenges that this was creating for European Mennonites, and to the difficulties of creating an appropriate forum for dealing with all this: (1) "The mandate assumed by MCC from 1950-1967 to be the channel of relationship between North America and the European churches has gradually undergone modification, while there has been a growing importance in the relationship of particular American Mennonite missions working in collaboration with particular European churches on a regional basis." (2) "There continue to be a variety of concerns which should be handled on a broader basis and a more satisfactory mechanism needs to be provided for this . . ." (Shenk 1967).

Council of International Ministries

For North American Mennonite agencies working in Europe, this "more satisfactory mechanism" has perhaps emerged in the past few years with the 1983 decision within the Council of International Ministries (CIM) to create a "Europe Task Force." All North American agencies active in Europe (see above), with the exception of the Beachy Amish, have been regular participants.

CIM emerged in 1976 out of the Council of Mission Board Secretaries (COMBS), created in the late 1950s as a vehicle through which MCC and North American mission boards could globally iron out problems and issues in their relationships, share information on respective activities, and carry out certain tasks together (Shenk 1986:6). And the forerunner of COMBS was the 1950 Study Mission to Europe (Kreider 1970:247).

In addition to fostering greater North American interagency cooperation in Europe, CIM has become a forum for interchange and consultation with European Mennonite missions and service organizations, who now regularly send representatives to the annual Europe Area Committee meeting. In 1986, an invitation was extended by the European Mennonite Missions Committee to CIM to name a representative to their annual consultation. The study and consultation process of North American Mennonite agencies in Europe has thus come full circle from the 1950 Study Mission but with a significant difference: two-way Mennonite traffic across the North Atlantic has become an integral part.

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Greetings from the Saints in Romania

HANS AND FRIEDA KASDORF

Introduction

During a recent study leave, one of our objectives was to visit churches in Eastern Europe. Johannes and Cornelia Reimer of West Germany offered to accompany us. Their familiarity with legal conditions, knowledge of the general situation, and acquaintance with many people and places in that part of the world gave us wide exposure to Romanian church life and leaders.

We met Reimers in Vienna and crossed the Austrian-Hungarian border on July 15, 1987. Hungary is remarkably Western in terms of tourism, road conditions, and freedom to travel. We stayed with a Christian family overnight and left for Romania the next morning. It had taken us three hours to secure visas for Hungary; it took twice as long to enter Romania. The best virtue in such a situation is a cheerful disposition coupled with friendliness and patience. Eventually we got what was needed and were happily on our way within Romanian territory.

About the country and its people

The Socialist Republic of Romania is a beautiful country behind the so-called "Iron Curtain." Its vast agricultural lands *appear to have* all that is needed to yield rich harvests; its large oil fields *are said to be* a source for promising plenty and wealth to the people; its extensive forests *could provide* adequate housing for the nation's 23 million inhabitants; and the beauty of the Carpathian Mountains, with the Transylvanian Alps cutting through the country in a wide arc from the north to the southwest, make Romania *a potential* paradise within the grandeur of God's creation.

What struck us as we crossed the border from Hungary into Romania was the frequent appearance of two words: "Ceausescu," the name of the president, and "pace" (pronounced "patche"), meaning peace. They were written on billboards, flyers, monuments, and buildings everywhere along the highways and city streets. The uninformed visitor gets the impression that Romania's leader is a man of peace, a claim he evidently makes, but one which the international press finds hard to endorse. Nicolas Ceausescu became the first Secretary of the Republic in 1965, promising peace, progress, and equality for all. He has ruled the country with a heavy hand ever since.

The government imposes harsh socioeconomic measures on its citizens under the pretense of reducing the nation's astronomical foreign debt. All basic foods are rationed, and some are altogether unavailable. People with ration coupons can buy a quarter loaf of bread per person per day at a designated bakery in their area. When the demand outweighs the supply, those at the end of the queue get no bread for the day. Such items as salami, coffee, and bath soap are not only considered luxury but are outpriced for the average worker. Even people in the West would not sip cup after cup of the brown aromatic brew from Colombia or Brazil if they had to pay about two weeks' salary for one pound of coffee—if available at all.

We found the Christians of Romania genuinely warm, friendly, and hospitable. Their evident loyalty to Jesus as Savior and Lord, their concern for nonbelievers, and their love for one another are true expressions of discipleship under the lordship of Christ. There was an almost instant bond of kinship and trust between them and us that transcended linguistic, cultural, and any other differences that might have kept us apart.

It was a moving experience to be greeted with the word *pace*, meaning "Peace be with you." The word is always accompanied by a warm handshake and often by an embrace or a hug, both when meeting and departing.

Hans and Frieda Kasdorf visited Romania during a sabbatical to England and the European continent. Hans is Professor of World Mission at Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary, Fresno, California.

For the believers in Romania, *pace* is no political slogan, but a code word loaded with spiritual meaning. It expresses both the vertical as well as the horizontal dimensions of peace. One hears the word expressed a thousand times when Christians meet for worship and nurture. And the more one hears it, the more melodious it sounds and its experience becomes increasingly profound.

Something in the tone and quality of that word convinced us that Christians use it because of its experiential meaning. They speak of *pace* anchored in God through Christ. For indeed, he *is* our peace, a peace that is the resource of calmness in the midst of spiritual conflict, of tranquillity in the midst of economic trouble, of serenity in the midst of social strife, and of repose in the midst of political repression.

Church growth and legal restrictions

Romania is ecclesiastically and missiologically a restricted-access country. That is not a negative observation, for the majority (about 60 percent) of Christians around the world live under restrictive circumstances and have the experience of the early church as an example. The Bible teaches that persecution and oppression are normal, not abnormal, phenomena; they are opportunities and challenges for witness and evangelism, not reasons for self-pity.

Church data

The Romanian government officially recognizes fourteen different Christian groups (*Dein Reich Komme*, Aug. 1987:12-15). They are permitted to function as church bodies (denominations) and allowed to have religious meetings in designated buildings at stated times. The largest denomination is the Romanian Orthodox Church. It became the official religion of princes and people when the feudal state of the country emerged in the thirteenth century.

An American student (Friesen, 1985) observes that, while round domes with orthodox crosses used to probe the skyline of cities such as Bucharest, today the scene has visibly changed. Those domes that still stand are made to conform to the new norms of city planning. The crosses are snugly nestled between and behind huge rectangular apartment blocks, hiding their symbolic meaning from view, and possibly from memory.

About 15.4 million of the 22.8 million citizens belong to the Orthodox Church, while the Roman Catholics have only 1.2 million members. Among the best-known evangelical churches are the Reformed with 520,000, Pentecostals with 400,000, Baptists with 340,000, Lutherans with 94,500, Church of the Brethren with 63,000, and the Adventists with 57,000 members. Some of these churches have an annual growth rate of 300 percent. The government knows that and seeks to undermine the work of the church by harassing leaders and penalizing members in many different ways (*Dein Reich Komme,* Aug. 1987:13; cf. Oct. 1987:5-6 and June 1987:15).

Restrictive measures

1. Distribution of Bibles and other Christian literature is prohibited. Yet the leaders we met need Christian books more than anything else. They want to educate themselves in biblical, theological, and practical Christian subjects, but have little or no access to appropriate literature, Lutheran and Baptist leaders told us. On the positive side, the Orthodox Church has produced and distributed significant numbers of Bibles among its own members. More recently the Baptist Union also received permission to print 10,000 Bibles.

2. Admittance to theological schools is greatly restricted. The Baptists, for example, have 1,300 churches in the country, but only 110 pastors. Their only seminary in Bucharest is allowed to admit only five or six students, up to thirty students a year.

3. Building permits are seldom granted to replace inadequate and overcrowded meeting places. In Oradea, for instance, the Second Baptist Church has grown from a mere handful to 2,200 members in a few years. Two doctors have given up their medical practice to feed and lead the growing flock. The Building Commission declared present facilities with a 1,200 seating capacity "unfit for meeting" and ordered the building to be torn down. After long and difficult negotiations, the government finally issued a permit to the church in 1985 to build a new meeting place, holding 2,100 people. The believers were overjoyed, even if this would mean great financial sacrifice. After making payments of over one million *Lei* (the Romanian currency) toward the building, church leaders received a notice in July 1986 stating that seating capacity of the proposed building could not exceed that of the present one. This was only a mild disappointment to church members compared to the order they got about six months later. The Building Commission now informed the church that the permit had been revoked, but that the Commission would consider allowing the old building to remain as is. In addition, pastors Gheorghita and Negrut have been subjected to renewed oppression by police.

4. It is against the law to hold religious meetings in homes. Belivers meet despite prohibition, even if this means paying fines up to 65,000 *Lei*, or the equivalent of more than two years' wages for one violation. As we discussed the issue of suffering with a pastor, he matter-of-factly told us, "We are called to follow Christ, and to follow him means bearing the consequences in suffering."

5. There are many other limitations placed upon the followers of Christ. Such activities as work with children, unscheduled meetings, and accepting words of greetings from Western visitors are forbidden. The pastors are often threatened with losing permission to preach, are subjected to heavy fines and house searches, and church members are harassed at their workplaces because of their faith in the Lord. Yet Romanian believers courageously declare without defiance that they live under a higher mandate than that of civil authorities. They see suffering and legal restrictions as opportunities for witness, not as subjects for complaint (cf. *Dein Reich Komme*, Oct. 1986:14-15; cf Feb. 1987:12; June 1987:15).

God's sovereignty and God's servants

Academically we know that the Spirit, like the wind, "blows wherever it pleases" (John 3:8, cf. 3:1-21). That is his sovereign prerogative. In Romania we saw some of the reality of God's sovereign Spirit working in the land.

Spiritual awakening is a major topic of discussion among Christian leaders in Romania. All over the land the Spirit is moving. A Lutheran pastor told us that the church is facing an emerging spiritual challenge, unprecedented in its history. University students and political intellectuals have become disillusioned with unfulfilled promises made by the "false god" of Romania's ideology. "Many are now open to the gospel and ready to turn to the true God, something unheard of as recently as five years ago," he said, "and we expect revival in our church."

God is also doing great things within the Orthodox Church. A dynamic revival movement is sweeping across the land, affecting all levels of society in all walks of life. This intra-church movement is known as *The Army of the Lord*, with some 300,000 followers. One of its great evangelists today is the priest Remus Bipart, whose powerful preaching attracts large numbers of people from all over the country to hear the Word of the Lord. Five leading priests have written a *Testimony of the*

Faith, as a declaration of the theological and ecclesiological position of their movement. Since they have no places of their own to conduct worship services, they meet regularly in homes for prayer and Bible study, a function strictly forbidden by law. Therefore *The Army of the Lord* has become one of the most oppressed Christian groups in the country.

We were impressed by the many lay leaders in responsible positions. Of the Baptist pastors we met, only one had the benefit of seminary education. The others are highly educated medical doctors, engineers, accountants, and teachers, with no theological training. They need books on biblical interpretation, homiletics, ecclesiology, and general Christian education. Presently, the Bible is their primary textbook and the Holy Spirit their main teacher.

In conversation with leaders in one city where hundreds have turned over their lives to Christ, one pastor's voice trembled with fear and conviction: "What we see happening here is only the tip of the iceberg. We are facing a spiritual explosion. The Spirit of God is at work and no one can stop him. We expect a great breakthrough of the Spirit. I feel it in the air. I see it coming. Pray for us."

Unless one knows the context, those last three words say much more than their phonetic or graphic symbol conveys. Until recently the young pastor was a tentmaker in a large congregation with 1,800 members. By profession he was an engineer. The story he told us bears repeating:

> *Today was my last day of employment with my company. I have a summons to appear at a hearing tomorrow morning at 7:00. I have to come before representatives from the Police Department, the Department of Religious Affairs, the Baptist Union in Bucharest, and the management of my company. They will interrogate me about my faith and about my ministry in the church. Though I am fearful of the outcome and its potential implications for the church, I am inwardly at peace and prepared to accept the verdict. Pray for me.*

He then repeated what he had said before about spiritual breakthrough in the city, declaring boldly, "It is the work of God. No one can stop it."

Experiences and stories

Our contact with Christians in Romania was primarily with Baptists. We usually communicated through an interpreter, but in a few churches the services were in the German language. Germans have lived in some parts of Romania for 800 years. They maintain their cultural identity and language to a remarkable degree. Understandably, that distinctiveness has not endeared them to the Romanian population. In some instances it has resulted in isolation and resentment, if not outright rejection.

In a German congregation

One of the German congregations we visited has about 100 adult members, 30 young people, and 50 children. We participated in morning and afternoon meetings of three hours each. The morning service consisted of a time of spontaneous prayer and intercession, congregational singing, music by the church band, and three sermons by visiting speakers. In the afternoon the church celebrated its annual *Kinderfest*, where the oldest children were promoted from Sunday school to the youth group. The entire focus of poems, songs, and dialogues was on Jesus Christ the Good Shepherd. As visitors we were again asked to preach. While we always had outstanding interpreters to translate our message into Romanian, it was delightful to speak to them directly in German. Personal communication happens more easily that way.

Although the temperature was over 100 degrees Fahrenheit in the shade (it was during the July heat wave in Southeastern Europe), the humidity was high, and the windows and doors were closed most of the time, there was no complaint or restlessness—not even among the children. We clearly sensed an insatiable hunger for the Word of God. We were touched by their genuineness and simplicity of faith and life, both in church and home. They had few Bibles. Their songbooks were printed in the nineteenth century, without notes, well used and repeatedly repaired. Songs and music for choir and orchestra were handwritten. But they cherished and cared for every piece as an irreplaceable treasure.

A Bible by the highway

For the most part we traveled in areas of the country where poverty is less severe. Yet the need for foods and other basic necessities was obvious. But that was not what people talked about—their conversations revolved around spiritual concerns. This observation made a lasting impression on us.

On one occasion we stopped along the highway where ladies displayed and sold embroidered tablecloths and other handmade articles. We were about to leave when the lady from whom we made our purchase pointed upward and whispered, "Pace, pace"—obviously wishing us the peace of God. Upon inquiring if she knew God, she indicated she was a believer, quickly pulling out a Bible hidden under the merchandise in her suitcase. We could tell by its appearance that the Book was well read.

With few words, we shared several moments of meaningful fellowship. Although separated geographically, ideologically, linguistically, and culturally, there was one knowable bond: the peace of God in Christ.

We shared the unity of the Spirit, the peace of God within us, and the unity in Christ with the believers of Romania.

Authentic lifestyle witness

We talk, teach, plan, and propose evangelism by lifestyle. It is one of the most effective means of demonstrating the reality of a meaningful relationship with the Lord and with people. But when it becomes a method about which we speculate and strategize, it loses its originality, if not integrity. In Romania we did not hear believers talk about lifestyle witness; they simply did it, and people were converted to Christ.

A Christian student told us how she had been closely watched for several months by another student. When she finally inquired why she was watched so closely, the non-Christian responded: "I really did not want to ask you for fear you might get proud of your behavior. But what makes you so different from the rest of the students?"

The Christian student had the liberty of sharing her personal faith and life in Christ. In a short time her friend caught the same faith, was baptized, joined a local church, and now gives her own lifestyle witness to other classmates.

The new "quiet in the land"

The phrase "quiet in the land" has often characterized times of persecution. When Christians fear reprisals and harassment for vocalized faith, they sometimes remain silent and refrain from public declarations of their convictions and beliefs. The Anabaptist-Mennonite movements of the seventeenth century and the Reformed and Lutheran Pietist movements of the eighteenth century are examples from history. We encountered this reality in Romania.

At a picnic with a pastor's family and their friends, we met a brilliant young doctor from Bucharest who was doing an internship in another city. We talked at length about Christian discipleship and its implications for his profession. After we had established mutual confidence, he expressed apprehension about his future position as a medical doctor. "I must soon make a decision whether or not to declare my faith in Christ to the authorities," he said. "I will not deny it, but if I declare it openly I jeopardize my career as professor of medicine." He went on to say that he had been led to Christ by a prominent professor who was one of the "quiet in the land," yet had a tremendous impact on his colleagues and students. "It's the only way," our friend said, "that some Christians in high positions can continue to witness in their profession."

We sensed the dialectical tension of this young doctor, but could neither offer conclusive counsel nor pass judgment on whatever decision he would make. We can only pray that his decision will allow him to be a dynamic witness in the context of his profession.

Witnesses in song and prayer

Romanian Christians love to sing, and their singing is beautiful. Frequently two choirs will sing in one service. While some hymns have been translated from German and English hymnaries, many are distinctly indigenous. Singing was often used as an evangelistic tool. One Christian singer, Simona, told us how the choirs sang the Christmas story along the streets and in the parks. "But," she said, "in recent times the police have been ordered to break up our groups." They now go directly to the policemen's apartments and sing to them and their families. "They listen with tears in their eyes," said Simona. "They have not yet driven us away from their homes."

We were told that there are frequent conversions to Christ among policemen, army personnel, and government officials. That is not surprising, for we witnessed Christians praying for their government. In one prayer meeting of about 80 students and young adults we could sense their fervent petition focused in two areas: boldness to witness to nonbelievers, and a manifestation of God's power for the conversion of nonbelievers.

These experiences reminded us of several biblical incidents:

1. The Roman centurion Cornelius was a government official who was remarkably converted to Christ, and many of his household became followers of Jesus as well (Acts 10:44-48; cf 10:1-43). Today there are still "Roman"(ian) officers who hear the message from Christians, and some make a commitment to follow Christ at great risk and high cost to themselves.

2. The apostle Paul urged Christians to pray for governments and those in high office because God wants them to know the truth and be saved. The added benefit is that Christians "may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity" (1 Tim. 2:1-6). Reflecting on how Romanian believers pray for those in authority, we have to ask why those of us in the West who have so much freedom pray so seldom for the salvation of our leaders.

3. The Romanian believers remind us of the early Christians. We rarely heard them complain. Instead, "they lifted their voices to God with one accord" (Acts 3:24) and declared by their attitude and action that they cannot stop speaking what they themselves have heard and experienced (cf Acts 3:13-31).

Weeping for the lost

One young woman with a responsible position at a chemical firm was distressed that she could not verbalize her faith as a Christian to fellow workers. "And yet," she said, "these people are lost without knowing about and accepting Jesus as Savior and Lord." She was actually weeping for the lost, something we had not seen for many years. Obviously, their way of life is the most effective testimony to nonbelievers and scoffers. The Holy Spirit uses their silent witness and convicts men and women of sin, judgment, and justice. Scores of Romanians are converted daily, among them professionals and civil servants, academics and people of the collective labor force.

Concluding lessons

Since our exposure to the churches in Romania, we often reflect on what we saw and experienced. Our lives have been impacted; we will never be the same in our life and ministry. Here are some of the things we learned.

1. The Lord builds his church; human beings are merely instruments. And God builds it under adverse conditions that we in the West find hard to understand, but need to learn to look at in a positive sense.

2. Evangelistic outreach happens more effectively through obedience of believers than through theoretical know-how and academic preparation.

3. Spontaneous witness under the Spirit's direction is infinitely more fruitful than the best mission strategy we could ever design.

4. Missionary motives of a suffering and oppressed church seem to be purer and stronger than those of an affluent church without any legal or political restrictions.

5. Discipleship is more clearly reflected by character and being than by words and doing, although the balance is important.

6. Genuine peace is maintained by an ongoing relationship with God and fellow humans, not by freedom and privileges granted by the constitution.

7. A conviction of responsibility without unrestricted freedom has a greater impact on the world than unrestricted liberty without a sense of responsibility.

8. Believers in the free Western world must change their thinking about Christians living under oppressive governments in restricted-access countries. We must develop a vision of seeing restrictions as opportunities for witness to Christ, the Liberator in both East and West, North and South.

We conclude with words of greeting from believers in Romania. Many times they expressed their appreciation for our visit and many times they charged us to convey their understanding of *pace* to the churches in the West. We want to pass that on to all who read these lines. *Pace, pace, pace*—from fellow believers in Romania!

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How My Understanding of Mission Has Developed: On My Way to the Future of Mission

LEO LAURENSE

I was a Dutch student in the fall of 1946 when I disembarked in New York to meet American Mennonites. After a short stopover at Akron, Pennsylvania, I traveled to Chicago to be met at Union Station by Dr. S. F. Pannabecker, Dean of Mennonite Biblical Seminary and an experienced missionary in China. In addition to opening my eyes to the "new world" of America, a door was also opened for me to the world of mission. I was raised in a traditional Dutch Mennonite church where missions were not part of the picture. There were broken connections between the Netherlands and Indonesia. And for a student in a rationalist-liberal theology department of Amsterdam University, mission was just as foreign as the American culture. During my visit to the States my eyes were opened to what God's mission involved.

The Pannabeckers and their friends shared missionary experiences with me at the dining table. I also learned about emerging home missions within the Mennonite Church. Although church life in the city was mainly intended to serve Mennonites moving to urban settings, home mission was reaching out beyond the household of faith, and mission across cultural borders was beginning. The Larks, commemorated in the *Mennonite Yearbook* 1981, had started their work among the black community only a few years before, and there was some work among Hispanics.

My exposure to Mennonite mission work introduced both good and bad methods. A visit the next summer to the mission station in Moencopi, Arizona, among the Hopi Indians made me critical of the method used there. Spreading the gospel by means of a loudspeaker seemed to me an intrusion on a defenseless village that had no place to escape from the noise. Evangelism should always give people a chance to make a free choice. This method gave no opportunity not to listen. Since that time I have questioned the preaching of the gospel in the waiting room of a hospital or any situation where people are unable to escape it—no matter how many others are blessed by it.

On the whole, Mennonite mission work up to that time was done in the spirit of Pietism, both in Europe and in U.S. Pieter Jansz, the first Dutch Mennonite missionary, had as his goal to "catch souls for the Lamb." Whenever a congregation was founded, its characteristics were generally evangelical but with the Mennonite name and with the Mennonite tradition of baptism.

But in 1943 Harold S. Bender gave his address on *The Anabaptist Vision* in which he raised the question of the Mennonite identity. In the next generation this question also penetrated the mission fields. In the context of Mennonite World Conference it influenced the concept of Mennonite mission: are we pietistic or Anabaptist? How do we live up to that name?

The confrontation of the Teutonic values involved in the name Mennonite with, for instance, the Japanese culture in which these should be translated and integrated was one of the thrilling experiences of the Mission Consultation, San Juan, Puerto Rico (1975). There were also repercussions for the Western churches that had to bridge their own cultural gap over the four centuries that separated them from their Anabaptist fathers. When Mennonites want to be called by the name of the former Witmarsum priest Menno, what does that mean?

Will the Mennonite Church tend toward the evangelicals or ecumenicals? Will that tendency be the same at home as it is abroad? There are special challenges since Mennonites have already been involved in interdenominational mission work (e.g., Europe in the work on Irian Jaya (a Reformed church) or in Tchad (a general evangelical church) or even at home. How do we serve the *oecumene* (Greek word meaning "the total world') best—by sticking to Mennonitism or by joining others?

In 1948 the World Council of Churches was founded in Amsterdam. Only the Dutch Mennonites and one of the German Mennonite conferences joined the WCC. In later years Mennonite Central Committee became involved because of its service activities. Beginning with the main issues of faith and order and life and work, with mission as a kind of midwife at the cradle, the interests of the WCC gradually moved toward economy and politics. 'The Church for Others" developed into "The Church for the Poor," and the mission department of the WCC gradually shifted from the call of individual conversion toward change in society, from micro-ethics to macro-ethics.

As a reaction to this tendency, the evangelical movement strongly defended the traditional view of mission (Lausanne Covenant, 1974). In later evangelical consultations the social responsibilities were also stressed.

Within the European Mennonite Mission Board (EMEK) this dual focus of mission has played an important role in the struggle for unity, especially between the ecumenically minded Dutch and the French who sometimes prefer an evangelical identity even more than a Mennonite identity.

But just as our sixteenth-century fathers wanted to be neither Catholic nor Protestant, perhaps we should advise our children to be neither ecumenical nor evangelical, but to take a "bridge" position. The gospel is a call to conversion, and salvation of the individual and of the world can only be reached by the acceptance of Christ as Savior and being filled with the Spirit for new life. The result is real discipleship, which can produce individual responsibility to the world both in sharing the light of the kingdom as well as in issues of justice, peace, and the integrity of creation.

So how do Mennonites deal with Mission versus Service/Relief, the Great Commission versus the Great Commandment? From the very beginning the European Mennonite mission was involved in education (Pieter Jansz was a schoolteacher). Medical work followed later. One could ask the question, what is the purpose of the mission school—to teach literacy as a service to the community or to teach reading of the Bible for conversion? To serve in the name of Christ as a means to conversion, or to serve for the sake of serving?

In Europe, the French Mennonites resisted founding an organization for service until well into the eighties. Until then all work was called mission. During the same time the Dutch gave at least twice as much to relief organizations as to missions.

EMEK and the Internationale Mennonitische Organisation (IMO) for many years have been separate committees with incidental exchange of committee members at their annual meetings. It took more than a decade of discussions before an

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Leo Laurense has been a pastor in many Dutch Mennonite congregations. In addition, he served as Executive Secretary of the Dutch Mission Board for ten years, and more recently as chairperson of the European Mennonite Mission Board (EMEK). He is now retired.

agreement was reached toward a "sprocket-wheel" model. Even yet a strict theological foundation for the mutual responsibility is missing. And even though the top level of leadership may reach agreement on mutual concepts of the kingdom of Christ, many church members on the ground level still demonstrate an explicit preference for either mission or service. But since 1979 healthy discussion has taken place, and in the Netherlands the issues of mission, service, development, and peace have had equal presentation at the local church level.

The emphasis on the peace witness was largely influenced by the presence of Mennonite Central Committee after World War II. In mission work it is still a hot item. Because of the influence of Pietism, in the former mission fields of the European Mennonites it was not an issue. It would be unjust to lay on the shoulders of the churches abroad—with a different political situation than we face in the Western democracy—"a heavy burden which the European churches themselves do not move with their fingers." But at the request of Indonesian Mennonites, European Mennonites have willingly shared their experience and knowledge to help the Javanese solve the tension between state, church, and the kingdom of God.

The formation of independent churches as a result of mission work has some clear consequences for the mother churches that need to be integrated into their policy. Following are some observations on the relationships between independent and mother churches:

1. More and more young churches prefer direct contacts with the "mother" churches at the conference level rather than with the mission boards, and sometimes even with other Mennonite conferences rather than the mother church. This must be accepted without any feeling of rancor.

2. Young churches are free to set priorities and programs. If they still need financial support, this should not be used to influence them to set their policy according to our desires.

3. Independent churches have the right to accept only the assistance they ask for and to refuse any offered help that does not fit into their policy. This was formulated in the Bangkok Moratorium (1970) and should be accepted, although it does not always function that way.

4. Expatriates should no longer be sent by unilateral decision of Western boards but should rather be called, selected, and appointed by conference agencies, with Western boards serving a mediating function only.

5. These inevitable changes in policy for Western boards seem to create difficulties in nondenominational faith missions and related institutions (such as Bible schools) that have to deal with young people convinced of a divine call to serve the Lord in mission, and with groups of believers and mission friends (often interdenominational) willing to send out and take responsibility for several members of their fellowship.

For those of us on the receiving end, the old principles of missionary-sending can create problems, particularly when these missionaries claim a special position or when mission boards maintain an uncalled-for link between two independent conferences instead of stepping aside and allowing for direct contacts and correspondence.

As the conviction grows that evangelism is primarily the responsibility of the local or national church in the third world, first-world churches are confronted with the call to bring the Word of the kingdom in their own part of the world. Apart from the continuing financial support for their partner churches abroad, they will have to concentrate on the secularized and post-Christian cultures of their own environment.

All church members are called as evangelists. All members must be trained, just as those going abroad have been trained. They must learn to speak the language of the heart in which modern men and women express their real and basic life questions. They must be able to give contextual answers as they are expressed in the gospel. They must be taught what it means to live in an atheistic culture (on both sides of the Iron Curtain and the Berlin Wall), amid modern Western paganism and the strong influences of Oriental thinking and beliefs and other kinds of ideologies.

Witnessing is done not only to those who are alienated from their churches but also to those foreign to Christ himself. It is not yet clear what position the church should take toward the non-Christian workers with Islamic background invited into European countries in the sixties to fill up the lack of laborers.

Mission boards must be willing to shift their focus to new challenges and adapt their policies accordingly. They must also increase their willingness to accept assistance from growing churches abroad.

Executives and board members will one time hand over their responsibilities with confidence in the fullness of the coming kingdom and, like Moses, will see the land the Lord promised to give to our descendants, which "he has let us see with our eyes" (Deut. 34:4), the eyes of faith and missionary experiences.

New Religious Movements: Partnership and Dialogue

STAN NUSSBAUM

This is the second in a four-part series on the significance of new religious movements in the third world for missiology and missionary preparation.

In the previous article in this series, a sharp contrast was drawn between new religious movements in the West and those in the third world; the importance of studying the whole of religion rather than only theology was explained; and the suggestion was made that new movements offer a window into the soul of third-world churches generally. In this and the next article, the radical implications of new movements for four key discussions in current missiology—partnership, dialogue, church growth, and contextualization—will be spelled out.

The word "radical" is used deliberately. New movements do not simply add one more perspective to the ongoing discussion of missiologists. On the contrary, both the existence and nature of these movements challenge some basic assumptions on which the whole discussion rests. The new movements have grown up for the most part without even knowing about such things as missiologists, much less accepting the categories in which most missiologists think. If we expect the new movements to comment on current debates in Western missiology, we will be disappointed because they are not interested in our agenda and do not often express themselves in our terms. If, on the other hand, we first study them as they are and then go on to reflect on our own working assumptions, we may find them pointing us to whole continents as yet uncharted on our missiological maps.

Partnership

The question of partnership in mission provides our first case in point. The assumption generally underlying the debate throughout the West is that there is a parent-child relationship between the Western and third-world churches and it is now time to transform this into something else since the younger churches are growing up.

The phrase "partnership in obedience" came into common use through the meeting of the International Missionary Council at Whitby, Ontario, in 1947 and was a direct attempt to replace the parent-child model. Yet even those who adopted it assumed that new partnerships were to be worked out by following up the existing parent-child relationships. A Presbyterian mission would become a partner with a Presbyterian church it had planted in the third world, not with a Mennonite or Lutheran one. A mission and a church already established in a relationship of one mode (parent-child) were supposed to transform it into a different mode (partnership).

If we picture this happening within a family business situation the problems are immediately evident. The son may become a partner with the father, but the nature of that partnership will never be the same as two unrelated people who become business partners. Exactly here we find the radical challenge of new movements. Entering a partnership with them is a new adventure altogether, a stranger-to-stranger interaction free from any history of parent-child relationship.

Numerous attempts to develop partnerships between strangers have been made during the past 30 years, particularly in Africa. The history of interactions between Western mission agencies and African independent churches was sketched by Turner in 1973[1] and updated by David Shank in 1985.[2] A conference at Abidjan in July 1986 brought together 21 people from eight mission agencies working with independent churches in ten African countries to discuss their experiences, and an occasional newsletter called *Network* now informally links these workers.[3]

The diversity in the patterns of relationship represented at Abidjan was so great that one would almost assume the groups had arranged a sort of comity of working principles—each mission must design its strategy differently from any other mission! In Liberia one mission is involved in a large program including Christian education, Bible translation, development, literacy and health, employing numerous Africans in projects; in the Transkei, South Africa, another mission has three expatriate workers all primarily working in Bible teaching and will not even consider employing an African with foreign money. In Zaire a missionary heads a training program at university level; in Botswana a worker specializes in nonformal training of semiliterate church leaders. A development worker in Kenya is the only member of his mission agency ever to work with an independent church; another mission agency has sent more than 20 missionaries to three countries, mostly as Bible teachers. One mission agency has six months of experience with AICs; another has almost thirty years.

Looking at the history of these stranger-to-stranger interactions, one must concur with the conclusion of the Abidjan meeting: "The group could see no pan-African strategy for mission approaches to African independent churches."[4] Some significant developments were reported but no magic formulas for partnership have been discovered and some missionaries have eventually given up certain relationships as unworkable. The Abidjan consensus was that the struggle to establish good working relationships with these churches is worth the effort even if the results of initial years of work appear meager in some cases.

Whether the conference participants are just diehards who do not have the sense to cut their losses and run or pioneers who have the grit to do the inevitably demanding work of clearing new ground, only time will tell. As we await the verdict of history on their efforts, we may note that the attempt at starting these new relationships differs from attempts to transform parent-child relationships into partnerships in two important respects. First, theological compatibility is not assumed or required as the foundation of the relationship. Second, the goals and strategies of the partnership are usually not clearly or mutually defined at the beginning. Each point bears further consideration.

First the theological issue. On the basis of previous parent-child relationships the Western agencies always knew, or thought they knew, that the third-world partner was Christian and even the particular type of Christian which would be compatible with the partnering agency. Coming to new movements as strangers, Western agencies have no history of interaction on which to base theological judgments nor are they likely to find any written creeds serving as doctrinal anchors for the movements.

Stan Nussbaum, a former missionary to Lesotho, is now on staff at the Centre for New Religious Movements, Selly Oak Colleges, Birmingham, England.

Sometimes closer study can lead to a more definitive theological evaluation as in the case of Marie-Louise Martin and the Kimbanguist Church in Zaire. Assigned to research the church in order to advise the World Council of Churches on whether or not to accept its application for membership, she became so completely convinced of the genuine Christianity of the movement that she herself joined it and has been working as a member for more than 15 years.[5]

In other cases the theological question is much harder, as for example with one large independent church which is divided into two slightly submerged factions at present, one seeing the founder as a prophetic representative of Jesus Christ and the other as a messiah who replaces Jesus as far as Africans are concerned. Can Western agencies enter into relationships with groups such as this, that is, groups which it is impossible to describe in terms of any one theological position related to Western theological categories? The Abidjan conclusion is that agencies can and should do this, in spite of the risks involved.

It must also be remembered that the independent churches may have some theological reservations about the Western agencies. Why should a vibrant African church enter a partnership with a morally lax Western church? Is the Western church a church at all, since it lacks the important marks of a true, living church, namely healing, visions, and prophecy?

Since each partner has some initially unanswered theological questions about the other, the goals of the partnership can only emerge gradually. This is, of course, not to the liking of the Western agencies who would rather start with precise objectives. Nearly all the partnerships do start with something that appears to be a shared goal, such as Bible teaching or development work, but one must not take these appearances too seriously.

A conference at Gaborone, Botswana, in 1981 brought this issue to light. At one point in the conference, Mennonite missionaries and their partnering AIC leaders from three southern African countries met in separate groups to discuss the value which the mission-AIC relationship had for the AICs over the previous five-year period. When the two groups came together to report on their discussions, they discovered that the missionaries believed that the relationship was valuable as a means to a goal—Bible teaching and leadership training—while the AIC leaders saw the relationship as valuable for its own sake. At the risk of oversimplification, we might say that the missionaries saw the relationship as a partnership in which both partners focus on a common goal, while the Africans saw it as a marriage in which the partners focus on each other.[6] Of course, there are goals to a marriage and results of a marriage, but these are incidental to the marriage relationship itself, not central to it as they are to a partnership.

Mennonite mission boards have continued to struggle with this issue of goals for workers with independent churches, and I have been involved myself in a debate by correspondence with one board formulating policy on this point. It is therefore not just an idle speculation when I say that one could scarcely devise a proposal less intelligible to evangelical mission boards and less appealing to the donors who support them than the one made here—a proposal to establish ongoing relationships with groups that have puzzling theological stances and not to set measurable goals in familiar missiological categories for these relationships. This unpalatable medicine in my opinion is just what our missiology needs, and one keeps on prescribing it in the hope that the pill will be swallowed, however bitter it may appear to be.[7]

If the Mennonite experience with African independent churches does lead to a missiological breakthrough in the understanding of partnership, the implications for missiology and missionary work could be very far-reaching. As the sixteenth-century Anabaptist Reformation was a "third way"—neither Protestant nor Catholic[8]—so this approach to new movements is a third way missiologically. It is neither planting new churches with our name on them nor partnering churches we have parented, but rather entering countries where we have never been involved as missions, taking seriously any local groups which consider themselves Christian, and entering into relationships with them with a "teaching-learning attitude."[9]

This is, of course, not absolutely new in mission history. Examples can be found among nineteenth-century missions in Turkey and Syria[10] but these examples are not well known. They all met significant resistance from the hierarchies of Eastern churches who believed they had better apostolic pedigrees than the missionary-sending churches, and they were all trying to swim against the current in an age when missiology was often bound up with Western imperialism.

The present moment in mission history calls both for reappraisal of the early experiments and for similar ventures in the new context of religious movements in the third world. The historical study and the current experimentation both address a major contemporary missiological problem—how can Western-based churches relate positively to other churches which they do not control and with whom they may have significant theological disagreements? Rome struggles to define its relationships with Catholics in China. A theologian from the Reformed Church of Scotland who is an expert on Athanasius discovers significant theological common ground with the Coptic Church through personal contact in Egypt. An American Mennonite teaches at a Baptist seminary in Yugoslavia. A conservative American evangelical mission sends a family to France to work for conversions within the Catholic Church, and the missionaries' teenage children are baptized as believers by a French Catholic priest.[11] The Seventh-day Adventists seek and often find cooperative relationships with mission agencies that had earlier shunned them. The Orthodox churches are increasingly visible in WCC circles.

None of these relationships are parent-child: all of them begin as contact between strangers. Clearly many churches are waking up to the fact that a sound missiology takes account of more than Western parent churches and their third-world daughter churches. Models for the stranger-to-stranger relationships are urgently needed; missiological theory has not yet caught up with the opportunities for partnership or even with the experiments going on at the present. New religious movements in the third world by their existence invite Western missions to burst out of their narrow definitions of partnership and enter a new phase of mission history, turning strangers into friends who may also become partners.

Dialogue

Partnership is not desirable or possible with some types of new religious movements. Following Harold Turner's four-part typology[12] we see that partnership is appropriate with the "independent church" type, the one closest to historic Christianity. It is much less likely with the "Hebraist" type and usually, if not always, is out of the question for the "synthetist" and "neoprimal" types because the latter two do not want to be seen as Christian groups and do not welcome partnership with Christians. In situations where partnership is not appropriate, it may be asked whether dialogue is the proper alternative.

The dialogue issue was hinted at in the previous section, but here we take it up more directly as a second missiological theme for which new movements have radical significance. The dialogue debate has been a heated one between evangelicals and ecumenicals as well as within Roman Catholic circles, especially during the past two decades.[13] A curious feature of the discussion is that nearly everyone rejects, overlooks, or has abandoned hope for dialogue with two types of potential dialogue partners—syncretists[14] and adherents of primal religions—precisely the two categories most often associated with new movements in the third world. This is even more curious when it is remembered that dialogue with primal religion was envisioned as a "real possibility . . . highly desirable" by Roman Catholics as well as ecumenicals when interfaith dialogue first received a prominent place on the missiological agenda.[15]

In any event, dialogue with primal religion has not developed as anticipated, partly because of the difficulty of identifying spokespersons for the primal religions but also for some deeper reasons which we shall examine. Sundermeier reports that dialogue with primals has stalled in ecumenical circles even though he believes it is one of the most promising dialogue frontiers.[16] McDonagh contrasts the official support and significant progress in Catholic dialogue with the "Great Religions" and the lack of such support for dialogue with "Tribal or Primal Religions."[17] Why these problems? To pose this question exposes some assumptions which underlie the current debates about dialogue and suggest possible routes out of the maze in which these assumptions entrap the discussion. We shall look at three popularly held assumptions which are challenged in this way.

1. There is a tacit but functioning hierarchy of religions, and dialogue is far more appropriate with religions at the top of the hierarchy than at the bottom.

Sundermeier pinpoints this as the root of all other problems in dialogue with primal religion—Westerners see that dialogue implies some parity and simply cannot imagine that primal religion is on a par with the "world religions" or "great religions."[18] Lobo complains of the "near total surrender" of the Roman Catholic Church in India to the "great" or "sanskritic" tradition while "the non-sanskritic or little tradition was seen as a mess of jumbled-up superstitions, beliefs and rituals of the low, uncouth, rural, illiterate, ignorant and backward masses of humanity."[19] One is reluctant to admit that the stated assumption, resting on discredited evolutionary and imperialistic perspectives, is still playing a major role in missiological discussion today, but evidence suggests that it is.

2. Dialogue means a discussion between people who belong to different religious traditions.

On this point a report from a 1985 meeting of the WCC subunit on Dialogue with People of Living Faiths is significant.

> *Another interesting discovery was that dialogue with traditional religions is fundamentally different from dialogue with people of other living faiths. It became evident that this did not foremost take place outside Christianity but within it, that is, within Christians themselves. Those who come from a traditional religious background have to face that dialogue every day within themselves, or within their-extended-selves, in their family, in their community. The "internal" dialogue(s) with traditional religion(s) (!) are so different from any other dialogue that they need quite a different set of standards and methods; they have still to be elaborated. The question may even be asked if this Working Group is the best place to realize this task.*[20]

Dialogue with primal religion seems to be falling between two stools, namely interfaith dialogue and contextualization.[21] It is not the same as either one of these. It cannot be handled well by the methods of either approach, yet it has significant implications for both activities and for their relation to each other. The WCC Working Group may rightly ask whether this "internal dialogue" is its responsibility, but whose responsibility is it?

3. One must enter dialogue without making any initial theological or moral judgments but simply assuming the other person is sincere.

This widely held assumption hit a brick wall when the subject of new religious movements came up at the WCC Working Group meeting quoted above. A Korean member of the group registered

> *a clear veto . . . against dialogue with the Unification Church. Even the idea grew that the Working Group should collect information on some, probably not so harmless, movements for the use of the member churches—but that idea was soon dropped since it seemed to represent the opposite of what the word dialogue stood for. Anyway, the limits of dialogue came clearly within sight of the participants; and hence the difficult question: how to define these limits in an honest way, also honest towards the non-Christian partners?*[22]

That question is a bombshell capable of blowing the whole dialogue discussion to bits. Evangelicals have often attacked ecumenicals for setting no limits to their dialogue, and it now comes to light that the ecumenicals do have limits. This raises a whole host of new questions: Why these particular limits? Why are some religions acceptable as dialogue partners and others not? What is a harmless religion? Which people will have to abandon their current religious beliefs before dialogue can begin?

These questions lead on into the relationship of dialogue and mission. Again the effect of the issue of new religious movements is to complicate the discussion. Do we as Christians approach some religions dialogically and others evangelistically? What is the difference between the kind of witness given in dialogue and the witness given in an evangelistic context? What is the Christian mission to new religious movements—evangelism, dialogue, partnership?

The stance which churches and missions adopt toward new religious movements is an unavoidable and highly emotional matter on which missiologists should be providing some assistance. This is no easy task since interaction with new movements involves a challenge to many current assumptions and approaches in the areas of dialogue and partnership. In such uncertain but crucial matters, what excuse can there be for anything less than serious study and reflection by missiologists and missionaries?

Notes

1. Harold Turner, "A Further Dimension for Missions," *International Review of Mission* (247), 1973, 321-337.

2. David A. Shank, "Mission Relations with the Independent Churches in Africa," *Missiology* 13 (1), 1985, 23-44.

3. Reports on the Abidjan Conference appeared in *Missionalia* 15 (3), 1987, 134-135 and *Mission Studies* 3 (2), 1986, 95. The *Network* newsletter is at present circulated only to persons who are "crossing denominational lines to work with African independent churches." For details write Stan Nussbaum, Centre for New Religious Movements, Selly Oak Colleges, Birmingham B29 6LQ, United Kingdom.

4. *Network* (Selly Oak) 1, 1986, 2.

5. Marie-Louise Martin, *Kimbangu: An African Prophet and His Church*, trans. by D. M. Moore (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1975).

6. James Bertsche, "A Report on the Gaborone Consultation on Bible Teaching Among AICs, July 27-31, 1981" (unpublished mimeo, Harold W. Turner Collection, Selly Oak Colleges), 11. The point made in the article is based partly on the above report and partly on personal recollection.

7. Goal-setting per se is not under attack here. The challenge is rather to the way Western agencies think about and articulate their goals, particularly the tendency to see partnership goals in terms more functional than relational.

8. Walter Klaassen, *Anabaptism: Neither Catholic nor Protestant*, rev. ed. (Waterloo, Ontario: Conrad Grebel Press, 1981), 1-9.

9. The "teaching-learning" idea was explained and advocated by the Mennonite pioneers among independent churches, Edwin and Irene Weaver, in a wide range of publications such as *From Kuku Hill: Among Indigenous African Churches in West Africa* (Elkhart, Ind.: Institute of Mennonite Studies, 1975). This has been incorporated into mission policy statements such as "Ministry Among African Independent Churches," *Mission Focus* 9 (3), 1981, 64.

10. In the mid-nineteenth century the American Board of Missions carried out a 15-year experiment of working within the Orthodox church rather than planting a church. For a description from the perspective of one who considered it a "complete failure," see *Journal of a Deputation Sent to the East by the Committee of the Malta Protestant College in 1849, Part II*, 2nd ed. (London: James Nisbet, 1855), 805-808. On the experiment of the American Board of Commissioners of Foreign Missions in Syria, see A. L. Tibawi, *American Interests in Syria 1800-1901* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966), 14-16.

11. The shift among some evangelicals toward working within the established churches of Europe is evident in John W. Nyquist, "An Evangelistic Strategy for Europe," *Trinity World Forum* (Deerfield, Ill.) Winter 1986, 1-3, and the response by J. Herbert Kane on pp. 4-5 of the same issue.

12. Harold W. Turner, "A Further Frontier for Missions: A General Introduction to New Religious Movements in Primal Societies," *Missionalia* 11 (3), 1983, 106-108.

13. John R. W. Stott, *Christian Mission in the Modern World* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1975), 58-81, sketches the opposing approaches. See also Nostra Aetate, the Vatican II document which cleared the ground for the current debate among Roman Catholics about other religions.

14. The syncretism question needs far more attention than can be given here. We simply note that even in a document such as "Dialogue in Community" (Geneva: WCC, 1977) which exudes openness to virtually all religions and ideologies, syncretism is rejected as a danger (p. 21) and we may infer that dialogue with those who have already succumbed to this danger is not positively regarded.

15. Quotation from the "final statement" issued by a meeting at Kampala, Aug. 5-7, 1974, organized by the Vatican Secretariat for Non-Christians, *Bulletin, Secretariatus pro non Christianis* 10 (28-29), 1975, 103. Papers from an ecumenical conference during this early and optimistic period were published as *Primal World Views: Christian Involvement in Dialogue with Traditional Thought Forms*, ed. by John B. Taylor (Ibadan: Daystar Press, 1976).

16. Theo Sundermeier, "Interreligioser Dialog und die 'Stammesreligionen,' " *Neue Zeitschrift fur Systematische Theologie und Religionsphilosophie* 23 (3), 1987, 225-237.

17. Sean McDonagh, "Dialogue with Primal Religions," *East Asian Pastoral Review* 22 (4), 1985, 353.

18. Sundermeier, op. cit., 226.

19. Lancy Lobo, "Towards an Inculturation in the Non-Sanskritic Tradition," *Vidyajyoti* 49, 1985, 18-20.

20. Jan van Butselaar, "Sixth Meeting of the Working Group on Dialogue," *Current Dialogue* 8, 1985, 5.

21. The issue of contextualization will be examined in the third article in this series.

22. Van Butselaar, op. cit., 5-6. Not all ecumenicals share the skepticism Van Butselaar reports. For a position more open to dialogue with members of new movements see Kenneth Cracknell, "Dialogue with New Religious Movements?" in *New Religious Movements and the Churches*, ed. by Allan R. Brockway and J. Paul Rajashekar (Geneva: WCC, 1987) 157-167. Pages 177-178 of the same work include the pro-dialogue conclusion of the Amsterdam 1986 Conference at which Cracknell's paper was presented.

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One Thousand Years: Stories from the History of Christianity in the USSR, 988-1988**.** By J. Martin Bailey. New York: Friendship Press, 1987, 61 pp., $4.95

Eyes to See, Ears to Hear: A Study Guide to the Theme "People and Churches of the USSR"**.** By Betty Jane Bailey and Constance J. Tarasar. New York: Friendship Press, 1987, 60 pp., $5.95

Courage for a Cross**.** By Leslie Merlin. New York: Friendship Press, 1987, 34 pp., $3.95. Also ***Teacher's Guide to Courage for a Cross***, $9.95

Map 'N' Facts: People and Churches of the USSR**.** New York: Friendship Press, 1987, $4.50

Reviewed by Ferne Burkhardt

Glasnost, a word not found in the English vocabulary until recently, has become common as people in the Western world skeptically view new policies of "openness" by Mikhail Gorbachev and his government. How appropriate that Friendship Press should nudge the door, opening it just a bit more to help bridge the gap between Christians in the West and East. Friendship Press offers several quality publications on the USSR to build understanding, a significant step in developing trust and friendship.

For many Westerners, Christianity does not fit into their picture of the Soviet Union. They may, in fact, experience stunned disbelief to learn that Christianity has existed for a thousand years in that land, and that today the Russian Orthodox Church has nearly twice as many members as there are people in Canada. Membership in other Christian denominations numbers over twelve million more.

The year 1988 marks the millennium of the Russian Church. This is an excellent time for North American Christians to test their perceptions of present-day Christianity in a country they have labeled "atheist." They will discover that the history of Christian influence in Russia reaches back to a date earlier than Leif Ericson's discovery of America.

When the Aztec Indians established Mexico City in about 1326 (centuries before the arrival of Spanish Christian missionaries), Moscow became the official center of the Russian Orthodox Church. At the same time that American and British soldiers were slaughtering each other in the War of 1812, the Russians formed a Bible Society. The first Russian-language Bible was published just a few years after Canada was born in 1867.

These facts set significant historical events from the East, West, and the USSR side by side over a period of a thousand years. A useful chart with its capsule perspective of world history is called *Map 'N' Facts* and briefly sketches the history of major cities and religions of the USSR.

One Thousand Years by J. Martin Bailey, a basic part of the Friendship Press collection, is not a history of Christianity in the Soviet Union. Rather, Bailey chooses six stories about people of faith, from ancient saints to modern church leaders, spanning one thousand years of turmoil and suffering.

He begins with the vicious and wily Olga whose conversion to Christianity ended her atrocities and resulted in the baptism of the people of Kiev in 988 in the Dnieper River, including her grandson Vladimir. He concludes with the story of Alexi Bichkov, an engineer turned Baptist minister, who joined Soviets and Americans in a prayer vigil while Ronald Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachev held their first summit conference in 1985.

These stories, set against a backdrop of Eastern culture, fascinate and illuminate the reader. Black and white illustrations, mostly line drawings of icons, symbols, and saints, enhance the stories. Unfortunately some of the contemporary photographs are of poor quality. The foreword and introduction provide considerable background and interpretive material to help Western Christians "enter more deeply into spiritual, liturgical, and theological dialogue with Orthodox Christians."

The book of stories is a basic resource for study courses on the peoples and churches of the USSR for adults and youth. One of these, *Eyes to See, Ears to Hear* by Betty Jane Bailey and Constance J. Tarasar, addresses widely divergent topics from the role of women to iconography. The guide also includes recipes, craft and activity instructions, worship material and music for an intergenerational Russian/Ukrainian Festival.

A special course for children—*Courage for a Cross*—aims to put a contemporary human face on the Soviet people through stories, like the one about Sergei, a boy who lives in Moscow. Leslie Merlin wrote the book and teacher's guide. In six lessons based on biblical texts, it includes stories and folk tales, games and activities, such as making borscht, decorating Easter eggs with onion skins, and constructing clerical vestments out of garbage bags! Peace and friendship are strong themes, particularly in the songs printed in the guide and recorded on a sound sheet that comes with the guide.

One of the strengths of all the study courses is going beyond mere facts. Students are urged to step into Russian boots and discern how they would feel in various situations. For example, a student plays the role of a priest and responds to visiting North Americans who press him to join in a peace demonstration. In another exercise, students are asked to define possible Russian stereotypes of North American Christians. Also, students plot their position of agreement on a scale of one to five in response to 20 subjective questions about USSR people and churches. They repeat the exercise at the end of the course. I would predict some significant shifts.

To enrich the study even further, Friendship Press offers a 20-minute filmstrip, *Sights and Sounds of the Churches of the USSR*, with sound cassette that includes Russian Orthodox and Baptist choral music ($18.95) and a set of 18 full-color icon cards ($7.95).

In addition a 58-minute color video in three segments, *A Glimpse of Heaven: Easter in the Soviet Union*, will be of particular interest to Canadians. It documents a Canadian ecumenical delegation who attend a Russian Orthodox Easter service in Leningrad and meet with religious and political officials. The one-half inch VHS cassette (also BETA) is available for $49.95.

Ferne Burkhardt is associate editor and conference correspondent for Mennonite Reporter, *a biweekly inter-Mennonite paper of news and comment circulated across Canada.*

The Church as the Kingdom**.** By Peter Price. Basingstoke, U.K.: Marshall-Pickering, 1987, 179 pp., 4.95 (in pounds)

Reviewed by Wilbert R. Shenk

This book is the fruit of rich experience in parish ministry in Great Britain. Peter Price is well aware of how traditions and forms ossify and stifle the work of God's Spirit. Equally important is the temptation facing the church to trim its sails to fit the prevailing winds of its socio-political environment. Price asserts: "The creation of community and the emergence of solidarity are at the heart of the struggle for the Church to become a sign of the Kingdom. We need some models." Price examines new models among the communities experiencing renewal in the British Isles, the basic ecclesial communities of Central and South America, and beyond.

This is a book with passion. The author cares about the world and the rule of God. He is convinced that only in the coming of God's reign is there real hope for the world.

This is a book with purpose. Peter Price calls Christians to renewed faith for he sees in such renewal the possibility of a vastly altered and reinvigorated Christian address to Western culture.

This is a book with vision. It carries a message and vision which grow out of personal experience of ministry among the poor and those who no longer claim to have Christian roots. The exhilaration of seeing such folk transformed through an encounter with Jesus Christ is contagious—and more. It suggests the way forward through new forms of being the church and new ways of reading the Bible. Especially refreshing is the way lessons and learnings from the non-Western world are woven into the text.

The only quibble I have is with the book's title. Biblically and theologically the church must not be equated with the kingdom, as the title might suggest. The author clearly understands the church to be both a sign and instrument of the kingdom. The title could have been chosen more carefully to reflect this.

Wilbert R. Shenk, Editor of Mission Focus, *is Vice-President for Overseas Ministries, Mennonite Board of Missions, Elkhart, Indiana.*

A Watered Garden. Compiled by Alice Huff and Eleanor Burr. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Francis Asbury Press, 1987, 192 pp., $10.95

Reviewed by Dan Neufeld

A Watered Garden compiled by Huff and Burr shares a variety of stories from the front line of missionary service. The short accounts of God's working in missionaries' lives come from all parts of the globe. For the most part the accounts show how circumstances have miraculously changed because of human prayer, resulting in divine intervention. Teachings on God's guidance and prayer not related to a specific incident are interspersed throughout the book.

As a devotional book, these accounts assure readers of God's concern for his servants, and God's power to change circumstances. It is as much a book on the power of prayer as on missions, but the two are inseparably linked. Since many of the prayers were answered in unexpected ways, it reinforces the sovereignty of God. Many of the experiences shared are common everywhere, making this a useful devotional book for any home. *A Watered Garden* should be read by missionaries as well as by non-missionary families.

Dan Neufeld is Director of the Mennonite Brethren Christian Service Program. He lives in Fresno, California

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Daughters of the Church: Women and Ministry from New Testament Times to the Present. By Ruth A. Tucker and Walter Liefeld. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1987, 441 pp., $15.95 (pb)

Reviewed by Frances F. Hiebert

Gratitude is the appropriate response to *Daughters of the Church*. Ruth Tucker and Walter Liefield have begun filling in the blanks in church history where the contributions of church women have been ignored and suppressed. The authors write from the perspective of conservative evangelicals. Although material from this perspective is increasing, little has been done since the turn of the century when there was more interest and support for the ministry of women in the conservative wing of the church.

The back cover of the book states that this is not a feminist book. Sometimes the text seems to bend over backwards in showing justification for the church's negative attitudes and treatment of women. But the total impact of the book must be a resounding triumph for biblical feminism.

The book is ambitious in its scope, attempting to supply information about women's involvements at all levels and history of the Christian movement. Beginning with Jesus and the Gospels, it continues through the early church, the medieval and Reformation periods, post-Reformation sectarian development, denominations, revivalist movements, and the modern missionary movement, concluding with a survey of contemporary understandings of the issues facing the church on the role of women. Three appendices deal helpfully with questions of biblical exegesis and interpretation (hermeneutics) and contemporary theological issues. There is a good index, an almost encyclopedic format that provides easy reference, and an extensive bibliography.

Ruth Tucker's unique story style demonstrated in *From Jerusalem to Irian Jaya* also marks this book. The "women's propensity" to tell the *whole* story, complimentary or not, makes the book not only historically valid but also delightfully readable and human. The pictures of women and the men who interacted with them are painted in realistic style. Real people of today can identify and learn from these human instruments of God's activity.

People of free church persuasion will find more here perhaps than others. This in itself makes a statement about the theological positions that support a strong role for women in the church. The missiological implications of this position underlie both the intent of the writers and the testimony of their historical witnesses.

The section on Anabaptists is brief and suffers from highlighting the most extreme manifestations of Anabaptist expressions. The Zwickau prophets are chosen rather than, for example, the Dutch woman preacher, Elizabeth Dirks, or the theological understanding of Anna of Rotterdam. This may indicate that we as Anabaptists are still too much "the quiet in the land" of church history.

Both Tucker and Liefeld teach at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. Both are to be commended for this evidence that a brother and sister in the Lord can work in harmony to mutually benefit the body of Christ. May their tribe increase!

Frances F. Hiebert, a board member of Mennonite Brethren Board of Missions/Services, was the former Director for Women's Concerns, Fuller Theological Seminary.

From Sea to Shining Sea. By William G. Tanner, compiler. Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman Press, 1986, 147 pp., $4.95 (pb)

Reviewed by Loyal Martin

This book is by design a collection of sermons for and illustrations about the Home Mission work of the Southern Baptists. In eighteen short chapters Tanner collects ten sermons and eight mission challenges by Southern Baptist Home Mission personnel. The sermons have a textual base, some moving to exposition of the text and others using the text as a story base.

Preachers may not want to use the sermons "as is" but may have their preaching ideas stimulated. The challenge chapters range from the "world in our midst," e.g., from ethnic ministries, chaplaincy ministries, and volunteer service corps to church planting and resort and leisure ministries.

Scattered throughout are stories and statistics of Southern Baptist churches and ministries—stories of successes and failures and statistics in ratios of development that only the Southern Baptists could give.

The book is intended for a Southern Baptist audience but is full of ideas for anyone who needs some "pump primers" about evangelism and church planting on the American scene.

Loyal Martin, formerly an Associate Professor of Christian Education at Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary, is pastor of the Carson Church in Delft, Minnesota.

Editorial

As I was preparing to write this editorial, I happened to hear an interview with an anthropologist on an educational radio station. Two things impressed me. First, the anthropologist despaired of the future of Western civilization. On the one hand, the West has achieved the greatest degree of technological sophistication known in human history. On the other, human existence is more precarious than ever. The promise of technology has also become our greatest peril. The warring tendencies of human beings are as threatening and troublesome as ever.

Second, this anthropologist has become an apologist of salvation through shamanism. Her message is that the way out of this dilemma lies in a return to the wisdom of the ancient—as well as modern—shamans through expanded consciousness and the merging of the self in a greater whole.

For the past hundred years a variety of voices have spoken of the crisis of Western civilization and the end of Western world dominance. Historians like Jan Romeijn and Carl Schorske have pinpointed the years leading up to World War I as the turning point. Others have given great weight to the fact that the West fought two world wars within the space of twenty-five years—evidence of its self-destructive tendencies. Explanations abound. But a definitive "decline and fall" of the West has yet to appear.

This development has already had important implications for the Christian movement. For most of the past two millennia Christianity—called Christendom—has been identified with the West. The two terms have long been used interchangeably. Therefore, the decline of the West has meant the decline of Christendom. This poses several issues worth pondering.

In the first place, ebb and flow characterizes all history. Historical epochs defined by dominant powers—intellectual, political, military, economic—come and go. It is in the nature of power to go to extreme, to overextend itself until it destroys itself. During the Western epoch the center of power has shifted to various parts of Europe and then to the United States. The position of the Christian church vis-à-vis society has also varied. In some periods and countries the church has exerted great power. At other times it has had only negligible influence. Furthermore, the way the church has understood its role in society has been far from consistent.

In the second place, Christendom—that is, the fusion of Christianity with Western culture—perforce is ending since it depended on its alliance with Western culture to keep it intact. In speaking about Christendom, we should keep a couple of things in mind. Western culture was never as thoroughly "Christian" as is implied by the term Christendom. In fact, the rapid and wholesale manner in which the tribes and peoples of Europe were Christianized should now be studied for the negative lessons it has to teach about evangelistic methods. Forced or superficial conversion in the long run proves to be no conversion. Throughout the long history of Christendom there have always been those who saw this alliance between church and political-military power to be a mistake. Consequently, the end of Christendom may actually represent the liberation of the church from a grievous captivity.

Third, the major intellectual development in the West has been the Enlightenment starting in the seventeenth century. One of the major forces set loose by the Enlightenment has been secularization. Secularization has been viewed as the special foe of religion. It has had both positive and negative influence. Secularization has meant the desacralization of nature; but it has also led to an overweening confidence in human rationality and the ability to explain all of reality in scientific terms. Religion has long been on the defensive. All religions have felt the threat posed by science. More recently the limitations of science have been increasingly recognized and discussed. But this long struggle between secularists and the religions has extracted a high price. The secularists have long claimed the intellectual high ground for scientific empiricism, leaving religion and the humanities outside the court.

The fourth issue has to do with the Christian mission to the West. So long as the language of Christendom prevailed it was claimed that mission was directed only to the "pagan" parts of the world, but not to the West which was already Christianized. Increasingly, it has come to be recognized that this was a dangerous delusion, a pernicious rationalization. Abbe Godin and those associated with the Worker Priest movement in France in the 1940s saw the issue with great clarity and were willing to try unconventional means in order that the working classes might once again hear the gospel. But Godin was largely misunderstood and dismissed as a somewhat eccentric figure.

After centuries of Christendom thinking, it will be difficult to change our outlook and begin to think about the missiological frontier that is the West. Indeed, we need to cultivate the conviction that the normative stance of the church in relation to all culture is the missionary stance. The articles which comprise this issue of *Mission Focus* highlight various angles of this challenge. They point up some of the themes and directions we need to go in exploring the issues involved and some of the practical implications.

—Wilbert R. Shenk

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Mission Future: Issues We Face

HANS KASDORF

Futurologists have different ways of talking about the future. Some talk about fulfilled future, immediate future, remote future, and eschatological future. Others speak in terms of waves which encompass huge epochs or entire eons of historical time, thrusting the present into the "Third Wave" (Toffler, 1980) with its high tech sophistication of the cybernetic revolution.

Still others refer to the future in terms of such more familiar concepts as *chronos* (linear time) and *kairos* (event time). Another way of saying this is to talk about *futurum* and *adventus*. The one is simply the chronological unfolding of the past in the process of reaping its inevitable consequences, both good and ill; the second speaks more of a qualitative reality, anticipating new events in hope and confidence that God is sovereign, in control, and salvifically at work to achieve his ultimate goal (cf. Lara-Braud 1983:3). In this sense, the future as *adventus* can begin today and God may well surprise us with the unexpected we can neither predict nor foresee within the complexities of the coming tomorrows.

But what are the issues we can discern and must face in mission tomorrow? From a preliminary list of ten or twelve issues I have selected three to be addressed in this paper: religious pluralism, increasing poverty, and shifting populations.

Religious pluralism

Ever since World War II, ecclesiastical statespersons have talked about the church as the "new phenomenon of our time." They are absolutely right. The existence of the church of Jesus Christ in some 220 countries of the world is not only a *new* phenomenon, it is a global phenomenon, resulting from hard missionary labor, many tears, and shed blood, as Raymond Lully predicted more than six hundred years ago. Lully knew the way the Lord would build his church which could stand the test of time and defy the gates of hell (Matt. 16:13-19). That in itself is a mystery of what God is doing in history.

This issue contains four major papers and responses presented at a Consultation on **Missiological Issues Facing the Church in Century 21** *held at Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary in January 1988. For further background, read Henry J. Schmidt's editorial on the last page of this issue.*

Understanding the issue

While we rejoice that the church is showing signs of growth and vitality in many parts of the world, we cannot close our eyes to its greatest spiritual rival which is as global as the church itself, namely religious pluralism. That, too, is a new phenomenon of our time. Of course, when we take the world as a whole, religious pluralism is nothing new, as Charles Forman (1980:247) reminds us. In fact, Yahweh, the God of history and redemption, declared war against it during the time of the great prophets of Israel (cf. Jer. 46—51).

What is new, however, is pluralism of religions in every part of the world. There was a time when religious pluralism was ethnically segregated and geographically confined to particular countries or even continents. That is no longer so. It is fully desegregated and diffused across the globe. Thus we can no longer talk about "religions of the Orient," as though they were distant and removed from the Occident. In fact, they are as vibrant and alive in the West as in the East (Forman 1980:247). This is true of East Indian Hinduism as much as of Oriental Buddhism, of Arabian Islam as much as of Japanese Shinto, not to mention the many new religious movements in the West.

Only a few decades ago neither ecclesiastical nor missionary spokespersons considered religious pluralism worthy of discussion. In American history of mission theory, for example, we find an appalling indifference about religious pluralism and its potential impact on the mission of the church worldwide (cf. Forman 1977:69). No missiologist with integrity can ignore the issue today, hoping it will go away if he or she ignores it long enough. Such attitude is unacceptable for three reasons.

First, Christian missions from the West have been the single most powerful force in creating religious pluralism. When missionaries brought the gospel to lands like India and China, Japan and parts of the Islamic world, they added the Christian faith to whatever religious faith the people there already possessed. Christian converts then became a new religious group. Not only that. Western missions—particularly those from Anglo-America—have by their very tradition of multiple denominations also created the impression that the church is not one unified whole, "eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4:3; cf. 4:1-6). On the contrary, the principle of denominationalism is in itself an ecclesiastical paradigm of religious pluralism (cf. Bosch 1987:8-11). The inevitable result has been that "Christianity began to appear alongside the traditional religion of each land and created a pluralistic situation where there had previously been none or increased pluralism where it already existed" (Forman 1980:247).

A second reason touches on the missionary aggressiveness of some non-Christian religions themselves. While Western Christianity has generally displayed an attitude of indifference to non-Christian religions, the latter have established themselves as missionary forces throughout the world, especially in the West. Not many decades ago Christian scholars of non-Christian religions contended that Christianity was the major—if not only—missionary religion. That is no longer the case. Today the non-Christian religions of the world are missionizing not only among non-Christian peoples, but also among Christians. The many Islamic mosques, as well as Sikh and Buddhist temples, in Western Europe and Anglo-America give evidence of that contention.

Finally, religious pluralism is not a threat, but a challenge and mission opportunity for the church. But the church will have to reconceptualize its mission: the religious of the world have become the neighbors of the Christian church in nearly every city of the West. Thus God has reduced the geographical distance between the mission force and the mission field.

Missiological imperatives

Religious pluralism, and its implications for mission tomorrow, have three inescapable imperatives for the church.

First, the church must acknowledge this new phenomenon of religious pluralism at her doorstep. She has two alternatives: either recognize "the continuing thereness of diverse faiths" and make the gospel real by demonstrating the meaning of Christ to them, or retreat into its safe shell and "concentrate on its own parochial well-being" (Gensichen 1971:29). The latter, of course, would be a serious mistake. The church dare not renounce its essential sentness into the world with the message of hope and redemption for faiths not anchored in Christ. If the church wants to aim beyond survival, she must be willing (a) to recognize each religion on its own merits; (b) to accept the religious person with a conviction other than Christianity without abandoning her own loyalty and commitment to the uniqueness of Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord (cf. Bosch 1987:12; Gensichen 1971:29); and (c) to declare the Christian faith with boldness and conviction without attacking the non-Christian's beliefs in arrogance and rejection.

Second, the church must equip itself with the fundamental teachings of the religiously pluralistic world. It is not enough to know what the Bible teaches about Christian action, character, and faith. If we take our sentness as church seriously enough to declare our faith, we must also know what adherents of non-Christian religions believe and why they believe as they do. This is why we at the seminary offer at least one course in theology of religions which deals with the theological tenets of each religion on its own grounds. Not only does this cause students to think through theological issues of the faiths they study; it also helps them to understand their own faith much better.

In order to communicate Christ across the frontier of another faith, we must do so in full acknowledgment of

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Hans Kasdorf is professor of World Mission at the Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary, Fresno, California, and a former missionary to Brazil for eight years.

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this faith's validity and in full commitment to the uniqueness of Jesus Christ whom God has appointed to be the Savior, Lord, and judge of this world by raising him from the dead (Acts 17:22-31; Eph. 1:15-23).

Third, religious pluralism demands witness with conviction and a decisive world mission strategy on the part of the church. The adherents of non-Christian religions total a staggering three billion and are growing.

Recent research has shown (Gallup 1986:4 and 13) that during the last fifty years Buddhism increased by 63 percent, Hinduism by 117 percent and Islam by 235 percent, whereas Christianity recorded a mere 47 percent growth rate. Much of non-Christian religious growth took place in the Western world through missionary efforts of these religions.

The Christian church must not only recognize this, but also change its mission strategy from foreign missions to world mission. Religious pluralism is clearly co-territorial with Christianity. Therein lies the new mission opportunity. God has reduced the geographical distance between the mission force and the mission field.

A decisive strategy will require a decisive attitudinal change on the part of Western Christians by becoming learners as well as teachers. Christians in many lands have lived for generations side by side with Hindus and Shintos, with Buddhists and Muslims. In view of this fact, should we not assume that these Christians have a far better understanding of religious pluralism than missionaries from traditional sending churches of the West? If that is the case, then we should learn from them how best to communicate the saving gospel of Jesus in a religiously pluralistic context.

Increasing poverty

A second major missiological Futures issue is increasing poverty. In a statement on "Mission in the 1980s," Mennonite Brethren mission leaders predicted that their projected strategy would have to take into account the grim reality of growing poverty throughout the world. Now that the decade is almost over, their predictions have become historical fulfillment.

Explaining the issue

Future analysts like Alvin Toffler, John Naisbitt, Ted Ward, Tom Sine—to mention only a few—all agree that poverty is here to stay, a conclusion that reinforces the words of Jesus when he said, "You will always have the poor among you" (John 12:8).

Today we live on a globe that carries five billion people on its worn shoulders. By the year 2000 that number may have increased to more than six billion. The present records show (Sine 1987:16) that 800 million or about 16 percent of earth's inhabitants live in "absolute poverty," with an annual income of about $90.00 per person. Approximately 50 percent of their children die before they reach their fifth birthday. Researchers forecast further increases in poverty as we begin millennium three, and predict a widening gap between the haves and the have nots.

Here then is the problem in a nutshell: first, while the number of the poor and powerless will increase, the hope of ever bridging the widening chasm between them and the powerful and wealthy will continue to decrease. Second, while the prevailing conditions are brought about by natural calamities and circumstances beyond the control of the church, the church cannot be a neutral bystander in the situation. On the contrary, the church is God's handmaiden with a prophetic role to change conditions through her sentness to the world.

Missiological imperatives

Both the prediction of increasing poverty for the masses and the prospect of increasing profit for a minority confront the missionary church with three inescapable missiological imperatives at the threshold of the third millennium.

First, engage in anticipatory planning. This is an enormous challenge, because it requires human resources equipped with time, wisdom, vision, hindsight, insight, and foresight. The onus falls on mission administrators. Anticipatory planning is more than long-range planning. In long-range planning we make projections as though the future will continue to be made up of more of the same or similar ingredients—such as needs, challenges, and opportunities—as the present. In anticipatory planning, however, as Sine (1987:16-17) points out, "we develop the capability to anticipate the emerging needs, challenges, and opportunities" which arise as a result of changes that occur both externally and internally.

This means that we must take the future seriously by analyzing internal denominational demographics, such as the age of membership, growth curves, earning power, giving patterns and capacities, denominational loyalty, missionary spirit, directions and modes of missionary recruitment, and much more. By doing so we can be proactive rather than reactive. "If we gain a little lead on some of the anticipated problems," notes Sine (1987:16), "we will have time to create some new forms of mission response."

Second, live by a stewardship theology. When the Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary began the decade of the 1980s as its decade for mission, the missionary vision of faculty and students gained momentum by the use of the slogan, "From Maintenance to Mission." This created a sense of stewardship theology among students and teachers alike. Many fasted and contributed the savings toward the poor and hungry. Others made additional donations and became aware of earth-keeping responsibilities by participating in recycling programs in Fresno. Unfortunately, that phrase was soon misappropriated by other agencies and the seminary felt compelled to drop its usage in the interest of integrity. This is not to bemoan the loss of a slogan or phrase. But I do regret the resulting loss of impact it might have had on our stewardship theology which is so imperative in the face of increasing poverty. The importance of the slogan, in my judgment, was the evident awareness on the part of a generation of seminarians to keep the dialectical tension between maintenance and mission constantly before themselves without losing the delicate balance.

This brings me to the imperative of a stewardship theology on a much larger scale. Evangelical denominations in the United States, Canada, and some Western European countries have traditionally upheld a stewardship theology which was demonstrated by their commitment to mission with a balanced sense of maintenance. Such watchwords as "The Evangelization of the World in This Generation" (Robert 1986:146) helped to keep their mission spirit vibrant for many decades. In fact, it must be said to the credit of the major Evangelical mission organizations that they have been in the vanguard of evangelism, education, development, and health programs in many parts of the world (Vatter 1987:8). But such zeal and fervor, according to Sine (1987:18-29), is rapidly changing as Evangelicals are shifting their focus from world mission to self-maintenance. Major resources are being poured into their own bureaucracies, church institutions, and affluent lifestyles. Their humble places of prayer and worship have in many instances become show palaces and tourist attractions. Many local congregations have built multimillion dollar structures to satisfy their self-perceived needs. As a result, they need all they have to maintain these structures.

David Barrett's research (1983:146ff.) shows that Christians make up only 32 percent of the world's population but receive 62 percent of the world's earned income. This means that while Christianity constitutes less than a one-third minority, it also controls nearly two-thirds of globally earned money. But how do Christians handle the question of stewardship and earth keeping? Barrett says that they spend 97 percent of their 62 percent of the world's earned income on themselves. This makes them more committed consumers than effective stewards. Even more alarming is this: Of the 3 percent which Christians give for church purposes, "only 5 percent flows into global Christian giving that supports world mission" (Sine 1987:19). Sine contends that a growing share of all Christian resources is being spent on buildings, institutions, and overhead costs because Christians fail to examine critically the priority of mission giving.

The problem is clearly spiritual and moral in nature. Christians who have bought into the selfishness of a consumer society have abandoned their stewardship responsibility under the lordship of Christ. The Anabaptist motto for mission, "The earth is the Lord's, and all that it contains" (Ps. 24:1) challenges us to a biblical theology of stewardship. That can change our pattern both of living and of giving.

Third, there is the imperative of gospel proclamation to all. If we believe that the gospel "is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes," Jew and Gentile (Rom. 1:16), and if we believe that the gospel actually transforms lives, then we stand under the missiological imperative to bring this gospel to all—the poor and the rich, the exploited and the exploiters, the oppressed and the oppressors.

In view of increasing poverty and injustice in the world, and in view of the widespread opinion that poverty is caused by the rich and powerful, and recognizing that exploitation and injustice are spiritual and moral problems, and in view of the biblical affirmation that the gospel is the power of God to transform minds, hearts, and lives, we must develop a strategy to evangelize the rich as well as the poor. Salvation in Christ makes no preferential treatment of people, although the poor may be more accessible as well as more receptive than the rich.

However, there is a great deal of truth in Frans Verstraelen's argument (1987:43) that we in the West will need to concentrate more "on mission to those in power" than on "foreign mission." This will mean "a shift from mission to the poor toward mission to the rich and powerful who sustain a world order where death reigns—hunger, poverty, wars—instead of the abundant life promised by Christ" (John 10:10). This is not to say that we should not evangelize the poor in future mission; we must continue to do so. But we dare not neglect the rich—even if they may be resistant and hard to reach. The power of the Holy Spirit is far greater to convict of sin and justice and judgment (John 16:8-11) than the power of the rich is to resist him.

The sin of the church, to withhold the bread of eternal life from the rich and powerful of this world is as serious as the sin of the rich who withhold the bread of temporal life from the poor and powerless.

Shifting populations

A third agenda impacting mission futures is population shifts. There is a centrifugal force that pushes and a centripetal force that pulls. These are shifts in the center of gravity. The result is movement of people from one part of the globe to another, from one mode of living to another, from one religion to another. Failure to take into account this phenomenal occurrence when viewing the future of world mission places the Western church in jeopardy of becoming buried in a global landslide of shifting populations.

Exploring the issue

Four areas have a special bearing on the future of mission. My concern will focus more on the outcome than on the process of these shifts. First there are historical shifts. Leaders of the missionary movement in generations past often defined the world in terms of the Christian Occident and the non-Christian Orient. In the West were the Christian fellowships and churches, in the East the pagan shrines and temples. The Western peoples were considered "civilized" and peoples elsewhere "primitive." The West was enlightened, the rest was benighted.

As late as 1910, the delegates of the international missionary conference in Edinburgh perceived the world as consisting of neatly defined geographical territories (cf. Walls 1987:27-29). There were then "fully missionized lands," "not yet fully missionized lands," and by implication, "yet fully unmissionized lands."

The evangelization of the East became the white man's burden of the West. Thus developed the idea of foreign missions as a one-way street: from Western Christianity to Eastern paganism. Such clean definitions made the world sound or seem religiously, theologically, and sociologically enviably less complicated for the church's evangelistic task than it is today.

But that time is over or never was. Not the time to win people to Christ; not the time to obey the biblical imperatives; not the time to exercise love and justice in the world; not the time to go into all the world and make disciples; not even the time to send and be sent is over. But the time of Western mission is past and the time of global mission is upon us. The population is shifting and so must the church if it wants to remain relevant and missionary in a changing world.

Second, there are territorial shifts. Such factors as international warfare, domestic internal revolutions, political upheavals, economic depressions, natural disasters, and religious persecutions have revolutionized human geography. Millions of people have voluntarily moved, and many more millions have been coercively pushed across tribal, national, and even continental boundaries. Geographically, the situation is comparable to the time of the fall of Rome and its subsequent "Christianization" of the West during medieval Europe. As a result, Europe became a continent of many states and nations, all of them "Christian" by name within their own territorial boundaries (cf. Walls 1987:29).

The fact that today some four million troops are engaged in 40 different wars is an indication that the territorial shifts and relocations of peoples en masse will not only continue, but will escalate around the globe (Gallup 1986:6). Warfare and revolutions alone uproot millions of people who search for "a city of refuge," for some kind of sanctuary, for a "place to feel at home." But such places are hard to come by.

Another way of speaking about the territorial shift of peoples, as Andrew Walls explains (1987:29), is in terms of diffusion—ethnic, cultural, and evangelistic. Europe and North America became the centrifugal centers of this diffusion process, with the missionary movement acting as the major catalytic force. While in past centuries it did affect every dimension of diffusion, it proved most effective in the evangelistic realm. Millions of people—sometimes whole nationalities—responded to the gospel and thousands of churches among them were planted in many lands. Yet none of these lands can be referred to as "homogeneous Christian states," as those of Europe and Anglo America were once called. This means that the idea of territorial Christianity, of geographically contiguous Christian states, lies irretrievably lost.

What we have left are conglomerate sociocultural communities with Christians and churches among them. Metropolitan Los Angeles may serve as an example of diffusion and population shifts. According to research done by Peter Wagner (1986:60-61), Los Angeles is not only the second largest Mexican city, but a territory with dozens of major and minor ethnic people groups living within its boundaries. An overview will be helpful.

ETHNIC COMPOSITION
OF LOS ANGELES—1985

People	*Number*	*People*	*Number*
Hispanics	4,000,000	Israelis	90,000
Blacks	972,000	Dutch	75,000
Germans	450,000	Hungarians	60,000
Italians	350,000	Samoans	60,000
Koreans	270,000	French	55,000
Armenians	225,000	Thai	50,000
Iranians	200,000	Greeks	50,000
Japanese	175,000	British	50,000
Arabs	160,000	East Indians	30,000
Yugoslavs	150,000	Indonesians	30,000
Chinese	150,000	Egyptian Copts	10,000
Filipinos	150,000	Romanians	10,000
Vietnamese	100,000	Turks	5,000
American Indians	95,000	Gypsies	5,000
Russians	90,000		

The facts that students in the Los Angeles Unified School District speak 104 languages and that the television station KSCI in that city offers programs in ten languages (English, Spanish, Arabic, Farsi, Armenian, Vietnamese, Japanese, Cantonese, Mandarin, and Korean), indicate that the above list of peoples may not be exhaustive.

Third, there are also sociocultural shifts. No futurist can overlook the social mobility of peoples within their own national boundaries. These are primarily shifts from the rural to the urban areas. While it has been suggested that emigration to urban centers may slow down as levels of expectation about city and country life gain greater parity (McIntosh 1986:25), there are at present few, if any, clear signs to indicate such a trend. In the year 1900, there were some 400 metropolises called "mother cities." Each had a population of 100,000 or more. Only 20 of these were then megacities, having a population of over one million each. Of these 20 there were two supercities—London and New York—each with over four million people. In 1986, the number of metropolises had grown to 1,780, that of megacities to 286, and the supercities had reached 46 in number. Researchers have added another category, namely fourteen supergiants with over ten million people living in each (Barrett 1986:22).

By the year 2000 the world may look more like a "globalopolis" than a global village, with such supergiants as Mexico City (31 M), Sao Paulo (26 M), Tokyo-Yokahama (24 M), and Shanghai (23 M) leading the way (Bakke 1984:153). The sociocultural mobility of people is one directional—from rural life to urban life—particularly in the two-thirds world (Latin America, Africa, Asia). Seventy-five percent of the people in Latin America, for example, will seek their existence in the cities by the beginning of millennium three (Sine 1987:17). By the same time there will be more than 50 major cities in the United States alone inhabited predominantly by ethnic minority peoples (Wagner 1986:60).

Finally, there are ecclesiastical shifts. A recent survey of the *Evangelische Kirche Deutschland* (EKD, the Protestant component of the official West German State Church) for the period from 1970-1985 provides a detailed regional analysis of membership mobility. The concluding figures show a decrease from 28.5 million to 25.1 million members of whom 2.2 million simply canceled their membership or removed their names from membership.

Speaking at the International Conference for Itinerant Evangelists in Amsterdam, Wilfried Reuter (1986:15-16) offered three reasons for this shift. (a) Evangelism as a subject is a rare exception in any of the theological curricula where pastors are trained. Thus young pastors have little idea of evangelism and mission when they assume their responsibilities in churches. (b) The church members in general see any evangelistic effort in their area as something strange, exotic, and even threatening. Therefore, they keep their distance or reject such efforts altogether. (c) There is also a historical reason. Quoting Martin Kahler, Reuter says:

> *The main reason for the ecclesiastical plight in Germany lies in the fact that we have never been truly missionized. The Irish monks pastorized us. The Reformation gave us many a believing preacher, but never a (believers') church. Thus mission must be repeated. Because we have failed to realize the need for ongoing conquest, spiritual alienation has continued on its course. That is why each generation cannot only be pastorized, it must also be evangelized. Spiritual life is not hereditary.*

The spiritual condition of the West German church is representative not only of Christendom in all of Western Europe, but in the Western world as a whole, including Anglo-America. The process of secularization—if not repaganization—is evident everywhere. Moral and Christian values have fallen sharply while crime and violence have reached an all-time high. This has led Alfred Krass (1982) and others to call for the evangelization of the neopagan West.

Some years ago Walbert Buhlmann (1978) predicted that by the year 2000 more than 50 percent of the world's Christians will live in the Southern Hemisphere. This means that the leadership of the churches is also going to shift not only from the West to the East, but also from the North to the South. Such reorganization process is nothing new in church history. We only need to think of the one-time evident Christian stronghold in Asia Minor or North Africa. Even if we do not know all the details of why and how it happened, we know that the church suffered enormous losses and the regions turned non-Christian. A one-time mission force turned into a mission field within a relatively short time.

Missiological imperatives

Against this background several missiological imperatives become binding for the church's future mission.

Review of mission thinking

Western mission agencies suffer from "a geography syndrome." Mission must be far away—in foreign lands or overseas—to be authentic. This way of mission thinking has had historical validity. The evangelization of the world in past centuries could not have happened had the church not crossed geographical frontiers and sent its sons and daughters to bring the gospel to regions beyond. But now that the church exists on every continent and in nearly every country of the world, distance is no longer the main criterion to authenticate mission. There are, for instance, no more fully unevangelized lands. But there are multitudes of unevangelized people everywhere.

The call for "mission on six continents" extended from Mexico City in 1963 (Androussa, 1960) is most relevant at the end of this century. Many European church and mission leaders concede that Western Europe has become a mission field. While many Anglo-American church leaders may still find it hard to admit that Canada and the United States have become mission fields, they should realize that it is not enough to "pastorize people," as Kahler put it: "Unless people are being evangelized and then nurtured and pastorized, the churches lose their viability of a mission force and become a mission field." The recent book by Earl Parvin entitled *Missions USA* (1985) should be read by every North American pastor and mission leader. This book's message, as well as my discussion of repaganization earlier in this paper, confirm my thesis that we must think in terms of world mission. This demands a shift in our mission thinking.

Revision of mission strategy

Churches tend to invest too much time and energy in things they have always done before and in doing them the same way they always did them. The following are suggested principles, not cure-all prescriptions, for revising mission strategies.

First, the principle of creativity. Every situation and context demands a different method. The risen Christ has given to the church apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers (cf. Eph. 4:7-16). These are not spiritual gifts as listed in 1 Corinthians 12:14 and Romans 12:5-8; these are people graced with charismata to enable or equip church members for special ministries and missions. The potential for creativity and mission in this combination is untapped. Western churches have become bound by the selective pastoral model which is hardly an inclusive biblical model for leadership in mission.

Second, the principle of prayer. When God's people mobilize for prayer they resort to his supreme power, a power greater than all principalities and forces of this world (Eph. 1:15-23; 6:10-18). World mission will move forward into the future only by that power.

Third, the principle of missionary dimension and missionary intention. We hear and read much of the missionary church. And that is valid. The church is missionary by its very nature; it has a "missionary dimension," to use Vicedom's term. This missionary dimension acts as a centripetal force; it attracts people from the world to the church. Here they find something they do not find elsewhere: a place to feel at home (cf. Vicedom 1963:39-51). By their kindness, oneness, and hospitality, believers display their missionary dimension as a letter written on their hearts by Christ and read by unbelievers (Bosch 1980:199-201; cf. 2 Cor. 3:2-3; Phil. 2:14-16; 1 Thess. 4:9-12; 1 Cor. 5:12-13; Col. 4:5). That is basically how the church under totalitarian regimes missionizes and expands, as I have recently witnessed it in Rumania.

While the missionary dimension is absolutely essential for the life of the church, it is by itself inadequate for effective mission of the church. The church also needs a missionary intention, which means that the church must be actively missionizing in the world (Gensichen 1971:86ff). Everything the church *is* reflects its missionary dimension, but only what the church intentionally *is and does* in direct relationship to the world shows its missionizing action.

Finally, the principle of contextualization. Since Lausanne 1974 we have learned more and more about the people approach to world mission. "The basic thrust is to identify the people groups that are as yet unreached and move in with an objective of planting churches to fit the culture of the group" (Wagner 1986:64). While I am not advocating the homogeneous unit principle of the Church Growth Movement, I believe that we must become culturally much more sensitive in our church planting and church building efforts as we move toward the third millennium of mission. Contextualization also means careful selection of leadership to match the need of the given people group. I believe Wagner (1986:64) has a point when he says, "Denominations that require college and seminary for ordination will not be able to move ahead rapidly in planting churches in most ethnic groups."

Conclusion

While I have named only three major issues we face in future mission, each has broad implications which must be highlighted.

Religious pluralism is a theological challenge. Biblical scholars must deal with the questions of sin, lostness, salvation, and final judgment from an evangelical perspective. This is urgent agenda.

Religious pluralism is also a missionary opportunity. The great religions of the Orient have invaded the Occident. Western cities and institutions of higher learning embrace large numbers of religious representatives from all over the world. The mission field is at the doorstep of the mission force.

The population shifts are a phenomenal reality. Repaganization of the West presents a double challenge: (a) The Western church faces ever larger numbers of people groups from other lands who belong to the "not-yet-Christians." This calls for "pioneer mission" on home turf. (b) It faces increasing numbers who belong to the "not-anymore" or "no-longer-Christians." This calls for re-evangelization of the many neopagans.

Poverty is here to stay. This calls the church to a stewardship commitment which means a reduction of consumption for self-maintenance and redistribution of means for mission purposes. The service arm of evangelism will be stretched to help the needy.

The global church is a mission force in partnership. Beyond the focus on immediate needs and opportunities, there will be need to perfect international partnership and structural relationship in world mission.

The spiritual dimension deserves guardianship. While I am opposing the dichotomy between a spiritual and a material ministry in favor of the centrality of the gospel in holistic mission, I am concerned that the issues are kept in delicate balance.

I look to "Curitiba '88" (International Mission Consultation of Mennonite Brethren) as an *adventus* for new inspiration, motivation and direction. God is sovereign. We are his servants worldwide working with him to achieve his purposes in global mission before Christ returns.

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Response to "Mission Future: Issues We Face"

MELVIN J. LOEWEN

I want to respond to Hans Kasdorf's three main themes of religious pluralism, shifting populations, and poverty by focusing on six issues that won't go away.

An ever smaller world

The world has become very small. When but two generations ago our missionaries went to "distant heathen lands" they went to what Kasdorf calls M3 countries: beyond cultural and language boundaries. Now the converts of those first evangelizing efforts are the parents of pastors, professors, and presidents. We meet at conferences, cross paths in airports, visit in each others' homes. There is a comfortable feeling of respect and affection as we meet cross-cultural friends who worship the same risen Lord.

But if transportation and communications can bring together new friends and colleagues they also bring together total strangers with differing cultural values and other religions. Kasdorf rightly emphasizes a need to understand those values and religions as a prerequisite to better presenting the claims of Christ. Well-informed pastors can sensitize their parishioners to understand and respect other religions, as a way of living with "strange" neighbors in this global village, and also as a means of leading them to a knowledge of a better way.

Yet, there are so many values already common to all cultures—and the longer I live among them the more I see the similarities of our ways—that evangelism does not need to wait. Courtesies, expressions of friendship, help in time of family needs bridge barriers of language and folkways. We have all seen totally naive people—really culturally dumb people—win neighbors to Christ because of their open acceptance of families as they are, not waiting for them to become people in our image. The future missionaries of this smaller village world will be the neighbors who accept the strangers within their midst, and laugh and cry with them in their struggles to attain their aspirations.

If there is need for adjustment to increased diversity there is also an increased commonality. Hamburgers, blue jeans, and Hollywood movies are everywhere. American ways are imitated though not always admired. But it's not only a one-way street. Tacos and enchiladas are eaten in Canada. African cooks can make Indian curry. Though the curse of Babel still leaves us with thousands of languages, a person speaking but ten languages could speak to 70 percent of the world's population, and modern commerce has made English the lingua franca of the world. I can see evangelization efforts taking greater advantage in the future of truly global characters, in stories and movies, to portray universal frailties and common heroes. There will indeed be pluralism in the short run, but common cultural denominators will overtake in the long run.

More people on a fixed land mass

Kasdorf's shifting populations are the consequence of improved communications which first spread the image of better life in the city or in another land and then offer easy transportation to get there. The mix of nationalities in Los Angeles is dramatic but less threatening to individuals in a megalopolis with many ethnic communities which offer social solace to the in-group, than the sudden influx of Pakistani Muslims in south Winnipeg or Sikhs in the Fraser Valley. As long as jobs were plentiful in Northern Europe, and *Gastarbeiter* were thought a temporary phenomenon, the locals were quiet. When those temporaries brought their families and settled down, however, calls were heard for tighter immigration laws and toughened border controls. (Perhaps one reason the Mennonites of Frunze and Tashkent have more religious freedom than Mennonites in some other parts of the Soviet Union is the fear ethnic Russians have of their own Asian and Muslim populations pressing in from East and South. The Mennonites make good foremen in the factories and act as a cultural bridge. The ethnic Russian wants the Mennonites to be relatively happy so that they will stay in Central Asia.)

If there is a natural pull to migrate to lands with more

Melvin J. Loewen is presently a representative for World Bank in Rwanda and has served as a missionary in Africa for twelve years.

opportunities, there is a similar pull within countries to move from the farm to the city. There are both push and pull that force people to the cities: a push off the land because there is not enough land to provide jobs; a pull to the city where the bustle may just possibly offer a job. That trend will continue for another generation but can be expected to slow as food prices go up to feed an ever growing population, and rural life becomes more attractive again. By then, of course, improved roads and communications make the village less isolated anyway.

Poverty

That Kasdorf lists poverty as an issue in missions is indicative of our changing perceptions over the past generation. Our early missionaries to Asia and Africa at the turn of the century often spoke of health and education needs. Mission societies responded by offering medical and educational services as a natural expression of evangelization. But to make poverty an issue in the future role of missions is to open a dimension which few missionaries will be able to handle beyond handouts and relief measures. If eradication of poverty becomes a major purpose of missions, we're in for rough times with our constituency—not because poverty is not a pervading cancer, but rather because its definition and its eradication are so elusive.

Everybody feels himself poorer than someone else. This sense of relative poverty pervades the value systems of both capitalism and communism. The former encourages production with rewards that promote "getting ahead of the neighbor," thus becoming relatively less poor. The latter encourages egalitarianism at the expense of production incentives, resulting in more or less equal relative poverty for all. That is not always bad, since it can reduce social tension. But neither system alleviates relative poverty.

In order to look at poverty in more objective terms some researchers have tried to define absolute poverty: a level of material degradation below which the body dies, or at least the struggle of life is not worth pursuing. The following criteria help to begin to define absolute poverty say, for an adult:

1) Adults have a caloric intake of less than 2400 calories/day
2) 50% or more of time and/or money is spent on getting those 2400 calories
3) Insufficient clothing to maintain proper body temperature
4) Unable to keep that basic clothing infest free
5) Housing that does not protect from the elements, disease-carrying insects, and rodents
6) More than an hour from clean water
7) More than an hour from cooking fuel
8) More than an hour from basic medical services
9) Sanitary installations unavailable or inadequate
10) Illiterate and innumerate

Even this definition of absolute poverty is relative, but it is useful in trying to define minimal thresholds for existence in the global village. In countries of Europe and North America—with money economies and higher standards of living—poverty is now defined at more than $4000 per year per adult. That measure of relative poverty is also useful. It helps to prod the public conscience. But in the global village any income or service level above absolute poverty is relative. And relative poverty is measured against one's neighbor even by the abject poor. A peasant in India who has a bullock to work his field and a donkey to pull his cart may live higher in his society's standards of comfort than the seminary professor in California with a car, a pool, and a VCR.

Kasdorf is bothered by the rich. He would like to pass the hat among the rich so that they will transfer their excess resources to the poor and thereafter also live more simply (consume less). At first glance that formula appears attractive. The premise is that the world's wealth is a given pie and that when the grabbing rich take less there will be more left for the poor. The pie approach proved quite successful in countries where wealth had been accumulated in tangibles (land, factories) by a fairly small number of people so that with swift confiscation there was a period of exhilaration among the masses as they partook at the feast. But eventually land must be worked, factories must produce, or all the people fall below the absolute poverty line and die. In the morning of that first day when all go back to work all are theoretically equally rich/poor. By evening some are already richer than others; either because their land was better, they worked harder, or they planted better seeds. So another distribution of wealth is again tempting. But the contributions of distribution to the alleviation of poverty are temporary. We must look elsewhere for long-term solutions to poverty.

The world's wealth is not a static pie. Wealth is created. It is human ingenuity and work (head and hands) that create wealth. When people are allowed some freedom to maneuver, some access to the means of production, they will create wealth. Witness the surge in food production in India and China over the last five years when price incentives were offered to individual producers. However, as soon as we talk of individual producers we risk encouraging personal accumulation and "a better life" for that producer and his family. At what point is the increasing wealth of a creative poor man no longer acceptable? When is he rich?

A certain level of acceptable individual wealth is needed to pull up the poor on an ongoing sustainable basis. The wealthy by their investments create jobs, the wealthy by their personal consumption create still more jobs. They eat out more, they buy more clothes, they build more houses, they stay in hotels, they go to concerts. They practice excesses, and create jobs. We need them to create the sustainable end to poverty. Yet we also want them to live modestly, and to support seminaries and missionaries. In our market economies one man's consumption is another man's production. What would be the result if the rich, whatever that means, were stripped of all their resources?

There is a third element to modern wealth. Money is mobile and cannot be contained under one country's legislation. Unlike the lands and factories which were owned by citizen families at the turn of the century, by far the greatest holdings of today's rich are held in cash, stocks, and bonds. The variety of financial instruments that can be transferred to another country in a minute is astounding. If an investor doesn't like pending legislation in one country he merely transfers his investments to an investor-friendly country. Witness the current contest among the industrialized countries to attract investors. Within that competitive climate, the poorer developing countries have little chance of catching the interest of investors who could create the jobs these poor countries so badly need.

Indeed, industrialized countries can afford to moderately equalize the distribution of wealth since other factors of investment security are offered. But the poorer countries need a take-off period in which they allow job-creating investors to become "filthy" rich in order to attract still more job-creating investors. (There was a period in which the Hondas and Tatas were appreciated for their creation of jobs—as were the Carnegies and Rockefellers in their day. The condemnations come later, not from the very poor, but from the relatively poor.) Later at cruising speed—when the absolute poor have been pulled up to the relative poor—governments can moderate tax holidays and extend the social sectors. But, we're getting into sustainable development, taxation, and trade and that's afield of this consultation. These comments are added merely to illustrate the complexities and the apparent contradictions to Christian values in trying to alleviate poverty on a global level.

Social services of the church

Having rejected economic development programs for the relatively rich/poor as a proper role of the church I'll now try to suggest where, in fact, the church should maintain social services as part of evangelism. The services of health, education, and relief to the helpless have always been a part of the church's role in the frontier and will continue to be so in any pioneering venture or missions outpost.

The church is always called on to meet human need. As in early America the church ran schools, hospitals, and welfare programs, so now in poor developing countries the church runs these services as a natural response to need. As countries develop, governments take over many of these functions to serve the masses. That happened in pioneer America and is again happening in the third world. There are, however, two levels of social intervention in which the church needs to remain active even in the maturing industrialized societies. 1) It needs to remain the prophetic example, the cutting edge, to correct social wrongs, and 2) it needs to maintain examples of excellence in those areas where the state has assumed its responsibilities for the masses. These guidelines will serve us well in the decades to come as we ponder not only the role of foreign missions but also the eternal challenge of the church to unsettle the comfortable.

The church and civil government

Mennonite mission societies have grown out of varied experiences with governments and are today operating under a full political spectrum of governments. Some have lived too recently with terror and tend to appreciate security. Others have only faint memories of capricious governments, and are tempted by the quick fix of revolution. Our mission societies now operate within contexts of affluence and freedom (say, in Japan) as well as poverty and restricted opportunities (in India and elsewhere). The exhilarating growth of the church in Africa has come at a time of increased corruption and declining standards of living. The Latin American church is generally free to worship, but the social and political settings rarely encourage a better life among the absolute poor.

The good intentions of evangelization and church planting will continue to be frustrated by hostile and/or corrupt governments. Not only are the results of proclaiming the good news, of running schools and hospitals and agricultural centers diminished by the constant trade offs between bakshish and/or further red tape; the church leaders themselves are tempted to adapt to the "local way of doing things." The political decisions, economic policies, and operating styles of many governments encourage poverty and social decline. No amount of external priming will lead to economic take off and social well being. But wherever it can the church stays and continues to witness. (It was the missions that kept peasants alive in Haiti during those long years under Papa and Baby Doc when the large development agencies refused to do business there.) The more desperate the social and economic plight of a country, the more important will be the presence of the church for both evangelism and physical nurture to the absolute poor. In countries where governments by their actions show that they truly seek the well-being of their people many agencies will support economic growth and the church can play its eternal role of presenting the gospel and being the prophetic voice.

Relationships to new churches

The next thirty years will see a maturing of relationships between the sending mission and receiving church. There will be less transfer of funds for operating expenses, although there will be another generation of matching gifts for capital investments in church buildings, Bible schools, hospitals, and equipment. For the healthy growth of these new churches and their emerging agencies, external funds will be more carefully tied to investments the new church can sustain over the long term. Whatever funds are transferred will require more careful accountability. The donors will continue to be generous, but to receive without careful accountability is to lead not only to atrophy in the indigenization process but to encourage corruption everywhere in the world.

We can anticipate a much broader exchange of pastors, scholars, and laymen. The maturing relationships will see us exchanging experiences at conferences and less formal meetings. We will encourage the twinning of local churches for mutual nurture. Friendships will develop between families and, instead of two weeks in Hawaii, we'll go and visit our Christian friends in Rio, Kinshasa, or Patna. We may even take up the writing of letters again. We could write our own epistles of encouragement to the churches in Bobo Dioulaso and Harbin. Our feeling of closeness in this global Christian community will grow as we deliberately set our will and time toward fellowship in Christ.

Summary

What shall we then say about the pattern of things to come over the next generation, say to the year 2020 if the Lord tarry?

1) Improved transportation and the electronic age in an ever smaller world will accelerate the mix of peoples, ideas, and religions. The greatest threat to Christianity will be secularism, not other religions.
2) Population pressures will increase. For yet a while rural masses will move to the cities, and urban "elites of the third world" will seek jobs in the industrialized countries. Tighter immigration laws of Europe and North America will become difficult to enforce as pressures mount to live a better life here on earth. Helping developing countries create more jobs at home will do more to lessen the pressure for "lebensraum" than higher protective walls against goods and people.
3) The proportion of the world's population living in absolute poverty has remained fairly constant, at about 16 percent, over the past 20 years. That still

means their numbers increase daily but their growth as a share of the total population has been arrested. That bit of good news is due to the remarkable increase of production in Asia at a time when Africa was falling back. Asia has shown the way out of abject poverty: 1) increase prices paid to producers of agricultural commodities and thus become self-sufficient in food, and 2) market internationally acceptable manufactured goods at competitive prices using plentiful low-cost labor. Trade across the Pacific is now greater than across the Atlantic and will continue to grow as low-cost labor from mainland China follows the productive example of Japan, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore, and Korea. The church will continue its relief role to the absolute poor, especially in Africa. It will have only a minor economic role among the relatively poor.

4) Therefore the social services arm of evangelism will continue to help the helpless. The church will also sharpen its perception of prophetic models that point the way in response to ever changing social issues in industrialized societies.

5) Missions will more clearly focus their interventions abroad, depending on the behavior of host governments. The more repressive and reactionary the political setting, the more creative and tenacious will be the church to at least maintain a presence. The more liberal and free the society the more aggressive will be evangelism and the prophetic voice.

6) There will be fewer distinctions that separate missions and emerging churches. There will be greater dialogue among equals, reverse campaigns of revival and renewal, less transfer of money, more emphasis on collectively seeking God's answers in his Word.

To make it happen will require the concerted determination of God's happy children on earth. Clear heads, skilled hands, and warm hearts will draw a host of men and women to confess Jesus as Lord within a growing fellowship in a smaller world.

World Trends and Their Implications for Mennonite Brethren Missions

PAUL G. HIEBERT

We live in a day of such rapid change that past experience is no longer sufficient to help us plan for the future. It should not surprise us, therefore, that the study of present trends in order to plan for the future—futurology as it has come to be known—is becoming an increasingly important part of modern thought, both in the world (J. Naisbitt, A. Toffler, P. Berger) and in the church (T. Sine, D. Hesselgrave, D. McKenna).

Seeking to understand the future in the light of present trends, we must include thorough understanding of the movement of history and of biblical prophecy. That we are moving toward global crises, the preaching of the gospel in all the earth, a falling away from faith, and the return of the Lord seems increasingly clear. But what implications are there for us as a church, particularly in keeping the faith and ministering to the world? As people of God we must seek to understand the times, but we dare not let that replace our dependence as a covenant community upon the guidance of God.

Here we will explore several critical trends in the world, and then examine some of the implications of these trends for Mennonite Brethren missions. They are based on social science observations and need to be tested in terms of our understanding both of the Bible and of history.

Our changing world

We live in a world in which change is taking place at an increasingly rapid rate. This exacerbates identity crises (individual and corporate), future shock, rising stress in sociocultural systems, intergenerational conflicts, and reactionary efforts to turn back the march of time.

What are some of the forces changing the world so rapidly? Here we will examine seven which in particular affect us as Mennonite Brethren and our program of world missions. These seven are not autonomous. They interact in complex ways: reinforcing, rechanneling, or blocking one another, depending upon particular historical settings. But all are at work in the modern world, and we must be cognizant of them in our planning of missions.

Population growth and the growing crisis of resources

Sometime during 1987 the world population quietly passed the five billion mark. When William Carey left for India in 1800, the world had less than one billion people. It took roughly one hundred years (1830-1930) for it to add a second billion; thirty years (1930-1960) to add a third billion; fifteen years (1960-1975) to add a fourth billion; and eleven (1975-1986) to add the fifth billion. Another billion and more will be added by the end of the century. Estimates vary from eleven to thirteen billion as the number at which the population will plateau sometime in the next century or two.

Most of this growth is taking place in the countries that can least afford more people. Ninety-two percent of the world's population increase is occurring in the "developing" countries that are already plagued by poverty and underemployment. In Asia and Latin America roughly one-half of the present population is under fifteen years of age. The average age in Africa is 22, compared to 35 in the West. In many countries the number of jobs, homes, and other basic human needs will have to double in the next two decades in order to care for those who are already born.

This population explosion is precipitating economic crises and instabilities of profound proportions. The gulf between rich and poor nations (Table 1), and between rich and poor within the nations has increased dramatically in the past century. While some segments of the world society are unbelievably wealthy, a growing number are dehumanized by a grinding poverty hard for us to

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Paul G. Hiebert is professor in the School of World Mission, Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, California, and former missionary to India for seven years.

imagine. David Barrett points out that 780 million people today live in absolute poverty, a condition defined by the World Bank as a condition "so characterized by malnutrition, illiteracy, and disease as to be beneath any reasonable definition of human decency" (Barrett 1982:5). Roughly 500 million of these needy are on the edge of starvation, and another 1.5 billion are malnourished.

TABLE 1
THE GAP BETWEEN RICH AND POOR NATIONS

	Less dev. nations	More dev. nations
Population	3.4 billion	1.1 billion
Per capita GNP	$597	$6,468
Life expectancy	56 years	72 years
Literacy rate	52%	99%
Per capita educ. expend.	$18	$286
Per capita health expend.	$6.5	$199
Per capita military expend.	$29	$300

(SIM 1982)

Food is not the only resource in short supply. Regional water shortages are becoming more severe. And firewood, the basic fuel for much of the world, is becoming increasingly scarce as forests are depleted. Agricultural soils continue to deteriorate, and deserts expand.

Population growth and competition for resources and power is leading to an increase in global confrontations between the strong and the weak, and to a greater geopolitical instability. Postindependence Africa has witnessed eleven wars, more than 50 coups, and the assassination of at least twelve heads of states. Thirty-four of black Africa's 45 states are either one-party regimes or under military rule.

The same is true on a global scale. Wally Kroeker notes that between 1900 and 1941 an estimated 24 international and civil wars occurred. The number since World War II had risen to 130 by the late 1970s (Kroeker 1986:5). Senator Mark Hatfield pointed out that in 1983 forty "little" wars were being waged throughout the world involving some four million soldiers. The cost was $140 for every person on earth, 17 million refugees, and countless lives (Kroeker 1986:3). The dollar figure equals the total income of the poorest one-half of the world. It amounts to twice the amount the world spends on food, five times the amount spent on housing, and 2,300 times the amount spent working for peace.

This violence has led to a sharp rise in terrorism. Missionaries in South and Central America, the Philippines, and Africa have been held hostage or killed. Others have left their work for fear of reprisals. And behind this violence looms the threat of nuclear war—a very real threat that increasingly terrifies the young.

Ron Sider, Tom Sine, David McKenna, and others have pointed out that the church and missions can no longer ignore these sociopolitical realities. On the one hand, our attempts to be apolitical are themselves seen as political statements. We are branded by the countries from which we come, and our very presence is often taken to be a political act. On the other hand, the gospel does address the issues of poverty and oppression. To preach less than this is to truncate the gospel.

Modernization

If one looks at the world scene from a missionary point of view, surely one striking fact is the inexorable march of modernity around the world. In lands once called Christendom, the church has yielded to its spread. In Africa, Asia, and Latin America, secularism—one of the "acids of modernity"—is beginning to dissolve the most enduring of religious beliefs.

This spread of modernity is one of the greatest missionary movements of our age. Schools have appeared in the remotest of villages, and children around the world are learning science, mathematics, and history divorced from a faith in God. Universities, hospitals, and research laboratories have become the status symbols of nationhood. As Newbigin points out, modernity is both a blessing and a curse for missions. It breaks the tight hold traditional religions have upon their people, and therefore frees them to convert to Christianity. But in its present form it also erodes belief in all religions including Christianity. In country after country where the gospel has taken root, by the third and fourth generation Christians have become secularized and nominal. Even if Christian missions are totally successful, there is a real danger that the world will end not with a living church but with nominal Christianity. Modernity as we know it opens the doors for Christian missions but is itself a threat to the gospel.

Modernity is made up of several strands. One is the emphasis on this world and on material prosperity, which emerged out of the Reformation (Weber). A second was the renaissance revival of Neoplatonic dualism between spirit and matter that led to a science divorced from religion. A third was the replacement of the organic view of the universe that dominated the Middle Ages with a mechanical view of reality (Berger). At first this was applied to nature. The result was the natural sciences and technology, whose temple is the factory in which nature could be shaped by human hands. Later it was extended to humans. The result was the social sciences and social engineering, whose cathedral is the bureaucracy in which humans are managed to achieve others' goals.

A fourth strand in modernism is a stress on individualism and self-fulfillment. The pursuit of comfort and pleasure are but expressions of this (Bellah). The result is an increasingly fragmented society in which ties to kin, community, and kind are eroding. Even relationships such as marriage which were once seen as sacramental, became covenantal, then contractual, and are now irrelevant (Bloom).

Globalization

It is estimated that until the sixteenth century the average person never traveled more than ten miles from home in a lifetime. The world was made up of localized societies often unaware of each other's existence. Two hundred years ago large regions of the world remained unmapped.

Today we in the West think nothing of traveling a thousand miles to attend one meeting. It is easier and faster for us to travel around the world than it was for our forefathers a century ago to cross Canada or the United States. Even ordinary people have access to almost instantaneous communication with much of the earth. The world has become one vast network of relationships in which few live unaffected by what is happening on other parts of the globe.

Initially globalization enabled the West to dominate the rest of the world. Today globalization is shattering that Western domination. Japanese own nine of the world's ten biggest banks, and control more of the financial market than North America and Europe combined. Singapore, Korea, and Taiwan are challenging the manufacturing dominance of Japan. And China is leaving its isolation and becoming a world power.

Globalization is also reconfiguring relationships. The West Coast of North America is closer in many ways to Tokyo, Seoul, Manila, and Singapore than to the East Coast. And multinational corporations evade the constraints of local markets and control of governments.

Discovery of "culture"

One consequence of globalization is the discovery by people that they have culture. So long as people interacted only with others of their own cultures, they were largely unaware of their own cultural presuppositions. They equated their culture with the "natural way" of doing things. Other people and ways were discounted as "primitive," "uncivilized," and "pagan."

The firsthand awareness of people in other lands has led both to the discovery of culture itself and to a growing interest in ethnic and national identity and pride. Old religions, festivals, medicines, and arts are being revived, and "Africanization," "Indian theology," and "shinchen" (emperor veneration in Japan) are terms of pride and cultural dignity.

Globalization has also led to cross-cultural communication and relationship problems. A recent issue of *Time* Magazine discussed tensions American executives face working in Japanese factories in the U.S. Yes, they would have to eat sushi and observe the elaborate Japanese protocols of introduction. Yes, the Japanese leaders wanted to promote Americans to the top positions in the companies, but were not sure they could learn the Japanese ways of thinking in less then twenty or thirty years. Businesses and governments around the world are working at bridging the cultural differences that divide them.

Pluralism

One consequence of globalization is pluralism. People of different cultures once separated by great distances now live as next-door neighbors. For example, Los Angeles has large populations of Mexicans, Salvadorans, Guatemalans, Cubans, Puerto Ricans, Arabs, Iranians, Armenians, Israelis, Sri Lankans, Malaysians, Burmese, Indians, and Samoans. In its public school system, classes are taught in 67 languages. Forty percent of the kindergarten students in Beverly Hills study English as a second language. Most speak Farsi (from Iran) as their primary language. The same picture is increasingly true of many other parts of the world. In Africa peoples of many tribes mix in the cities; in India migrants from different linguistic regions work in the same city offices.

Increasingly people also face religious pluralism firsthand. At the beginning of this century Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, and Sikhs were in Arabia, India, Thailand, and China. Today the Regent's Park Mosque is one of the most beautiful worship centers in London, and in nearby Brent, Muslims pray in what was once a Reformed Church building. In east London they use an old synagogue. Mosques and Hindu temples complete with idols are being built in Washington, D.C., Los Angeles, and other North American cities.

Racial and cultural clashes are common around the world as local communities are invaded by outsiders. And deep intergenerational tensions emerge as children of migrants reject the ways of their parents. How can people of such different cultures and religions live together in the same communities? One alternative is to require everyone to convert or at least acquiesce to the beliefs of the dominant culture. But this conflicts with the growing sense of cultural pride and identity most people have. And it frequently leads to conflicts. Another alternative is to institute a caste system in which each community is encapsulated and is required to let other groups believe and act as they wish.

Urbanization

The world is rapidly becoming not a global village but a global city. We are living in the middle of the greatest exodus the earth has ever seen as people around the world move from fields and villages to exploding urban centers. An estimated one billion people worldwide will migrate to cities in the 1980s alone. In 1900 only 5.5 percent of the world's population lived in cities with populations over 100,000 people. By 2000 this will have risen to 38 percent, and by 2050 more than 75 percent. In 1900 there were no cities with five million inhabitants. By 2000 there will be 65. Twenty-four of these will have more than ten million. More than 430 will have more than one million people in them!

In the past, urbanization characterized the West. Today urbanization is occurring most rapidly in the two-thirds world (see Table 2).

TABLE 2
THE URBAN POPULATION OF THE WORLD
(in millions)

	1950	1985	2020
Two-thirds World	332	1,256	3,606
Western World (N. Am., USSR, Europe, Australia, N.Z.)	404	757	1,048

Mexico City is growing at a rate of 80,000 per month, and by the year 2000 it will be the largest city in the world, with 31 million people. In 1900 nine out of the top ten cities were in the so-called Christian West, with New York at the top. In 2000 New York will be the only Western city in the top ten, and it will be number seven. By 2030, no Western city will be in the top ten cities of the world. Seven will be in Asia, two in Latin America, and one (Mexico City) in North America. The settings for most of these cities will be the Hindu, Buddhist, and Muslim worlds.

Along with urbanization goes networking. The cities of the world are linked to each other by planes, ships, mail, telecommunications, telephone, computers, and satellite communications. What happens in one affects the others almost instantly.

The fundamentalist reaction

It should not surprise us in the face of the worldwide onslaught of modernity, science, and urbanization that most major religions are experiencing a revival of fundamentalism. Today fundamentalist movements in Islam (such as the Islamic Shiite), Hinduism (R.S.S. and Jan Sangh), and Buddhism are resisting the spread of modernity, and of Christianity, which they see as the bearer of modernity. They are also seeking to revive old religious ways and to draw Christian converts back into their folds.

One consequence of this fundamentalist reaction is a growing rejection of the West and its cultural practices. This collides with the forces of modernity at work in many of these countries, creating tremendous internal tensions and conflicts.

Reaction to modernity is not limited to Asia and Africa. There is an explosion of spiritism in South America, and a spread of New Age cults and teachings in North America and Europe, affecting even Christian churches (Groothuis, Hunt). The former is a reversion to African traditional religions, the latter an influx of Hindu and Buddhist idealism. The challenge to the Christian church is no longer confined to mission to the lost. It is now threatened with an erosion of its home base, with heresy (Matt. 24:10-11, 24; 2 Thess. 2:3; 2 Pet. 2:1-3), and with materialistic self-love (Luke 12:19-21; Rev. 3:17).

Our changing church

How will these trends affect our Mennonite Brethren programs? And what plans should we make in the light of them? We will look at some of the implications of these currents for the church and missions in general, and for the Mennonite Brethren in particular.

Population growth and crises of resources

The tremendous population growth means that the mission task is greater than ever. Despite the successes of the modern mission movement, there are more now who have never heard the gospel sufficiently to make a meaningful decision to follow Christ than when William Carey went to India almost two centuries ago. While the evangelical and charismatic churches continue to grow rapidly, the world percentage of Christians has remained the same, or dropped slightly, during this century. In contrast to this, the world percentages of Muslim and secularists is growing.

The implications for the Mennonite Brethren are great. As Christians we are responsible along with other believers to proclaim the gospel so that all may hear and be saved. We have expanded the number of places in which we work, but in many of these our force is small. In India and Africa we have Mennonite Brethren churches, but we tend to forget that the populations we pledged to evangelize have more than doubled. Few others are laboring in these assigned areas. If the people are to hear the gospel, we must proclaim it. We need to develop more effective partnerships between the Mennonite Brethren churches in North America, Africa, and India to evangelize fully the territories we took as our responsibility before God and the greater church.

The growing socioeconomic crises and political conflicts are a great challenge to the church. Unlike many on the evangelical scene, we as Mennonite Brethren have emphasized the need to proclaim a whole gospel rooted in a theology of the kingdom of God. In many ways we are more prepared to minister in a broken world. But we in North America are not free from the dualism that has divided Western missions between evangelism and the social gospel. Where we evangelize we need to be aware of the felt needs of the people. But equally, we must make certain that where we minister to human material, psychological, and social needs, we are forthright in proclaiming salvation. Anything less is not the gospel.

One long-range effect of worldwide human crises is donor fatigue. Following the famine in Ethiopia, there was an outpouring of contributions. After two years, however, these declined markedly despite continued desperate needs there and in other parts of the world. So far, the Mennonite Brethren have maintained a high level of contributions for human need, but we dare not take this for granted.

Modernization

Modernity, born in part out of the Reformation, is a great blessing and a great danger for the church. It has enabled us to deal with human needs such as food, health, transportation, and communication. It has also focused our attention increasingly on ourselves and worldly comfort. Abroad it is breaking down the stranglehold traditional religions have on people (Newbigin), but it is also bringing in secularism and nominalism.

One consequence of modern individualism in missions is a shift in focus from the task to the missionary. Increasingly, candidates on the broader mission scene ask the question, "What is in it for me? Will I find self-fulfillment in mission?" Few speak of a calling to a task for which they are willing to give their whole life, and to die if necessary. The result is a marked increase of short-term ministries as people give a few years to God, or see how they enjoy the work. James Aiken (7) writes,

> *Pursuing wealth as a sign of God's favor has adversely affected other ministries. Charles Farrah, theology professor at Oral Roberts University, blames prosperity preaching for the charismatic movement's inability to produce long-term missionaries: "If people are concerned about upward mobility, missions isn't a good field to choose."*

A second consequence of individualism is entrepreneurship and independence in missions. Those not willing to work within the constraints of a church community feel free to set up their own mission agencies. During the 1970s, a record setting 150 new mission agencies were formed in North America alone, most unaffiliated with a denomination or church body (Wilson 1986:593-594). If anything the pace of forming new parachurch agencies has increased in the 1980s. David Barrett (1987:25) estimates that between 1980 and 1987 the total church income worldwide increased from 64.5 to 79 billion dollars U.S. (22 percent), but that by the year 2000 it will rise to no more than 80 billion dollars (24 percent over 1980). Parachurch and institutional income, he says, increased from 35.8 to 60 billion dollars in the same time (67 percent), and by 2000 will jump to 120 billion (235 percent).

The effects of this on church mission agencies are already being felt. Many early parachurch mission agencies were established for specialized ministries such as Bible translation, radio broadcasting, and relief in which interdenominational cooperation is important. Now most parachurch agencies are focusing on planting churches which is ironic since they have weak ecclesiologies and few strong church ties.

For the Mennonite Brethren this means increasing competition for missionaries and resources. Parachurch agencies can make more exciting, personalized appeals than churches because they are rarely caught up in the more difficult task of nurturing converts to maturity. There is more immediate excitement in giving birth to a child than in raising it. Moreover, these agencies are often specialized appeals to particular audiences in the church.

This appeal of entrepreneurial missions will grow as our own commitment to individualism grows, and as our view of the church shifts from community to club. Unfortunately, many North Americans see denominations as different franchises, and local churches as interchangeable filling stations where they can stop periodically to satisfy their needs. Entrepreneurship in missions can create a short-term increase in mission interest, but in the long run it will undermine the church as a committed Christian community. What this says to us as Mennonite Brethren is that we need to be flexible, and to strike a balance between our corporate and personal visions.

Finally, the technological revolution is changing the face of missions, for good and bad. We now can travel and survive anywhere in the world. And media opens doors for communicating with more people than ever before. This media explosion is reflected in the rapid growth in Christian literature, radio, and television (Table 3).

TABLE 3
CHRISTIAN MEDIA

Media	1900	1985	2000
Christian Literature:			
New Christian books pr. yr.	2,200	20,800	25,000
Christian periodicals	3,500	21,000	35,000
Bibles distributed	5,452,600	43,000,000	70,000,000
Christian Broadcasting:			
Christian radio/TV stns.	0	1,580	4,000
Monthly audience			
—for Christian stations	0	370,000,000	600,000,000
—for all Christian prgrms.	0	1,090,000,000	2,150,000,000

(Barrett 1985:51)

Mass media have been particularly effective in spreading information. They have been less effective in leading people to personal commitments to Christ, and least effective in bringing converts together into assemblies of believers. Consequently we cannot look to media as the primary means of evangelism and missions. There is a danger of substituting travel for mission work, and media for personal witness based on relationships of love and trust. The basis of God's mission to the world, as he showed in Christ, is still people.

Globalization

Missions continue to change the face of the church. No longer is the West the center of Christianity (Table 4). There are centers in many parts of the world. By the end of this century Barrett estimates that the largest number of Christians on any continent will be in Africa. Large churches have also arisen in Latin America, China, and north India.

This globalization of the church calls for cooperative mission programs in which churches in different lands form partnerships in outreach. It calls for cooperation between churches in different lands in building one another in faith and life.

One result of this worldwide spread of the church has been the rapid increase in the number of non-Western missionaries as young churches catch the vision of missions. In 1980 the number of missionaries sent out by churches in Asia was estimated to be 4,980. By 1985 this number had grown to 10,210. In 1990 the figure could rise to 20,000 (Pate 1986:6). An equal number of missionaries is being sent out by Africa, Latin America, and the Pacific Islands. By the end of the century the number of missionaries sent by two-third's world churches will probably equal or exceed those sent by the West. Many of these missionaries will go to people in other cultures in their own or neighboring countries. Others, however, will go to other parts of the world, and to regions where Western missionaries are not permitted to enter.

TABLE 4
GLOBALIZATION OF THE CHURCH

	1900 millions	% of World's Christians	1980 millions	% of World's Christians	2000 millions	% of World's Christians
Christians in West	471	84	547	38	592	29
Christians in Communist World			254	18	444	22
Christians in 2/3 World	87	16	632	44	984	49

	% of World Population	% of World Population	% of World Population
Christians	34.4	32.8	32.3
Muslims	12.4	17.1	19.2
Hindus (excluding New Age, etc.)	12.5	13.5	13.7
Buddhists	7.8	6.2	5.7
Secularists	.2	21.3	21.3

(from Barrett 1982)

Not only does the West have material riches, compared to the rest of the world it has an abundance of Christian leaders, schools, publications, and facilities. In the non-Western world the rapid growth of the church has outstripped the number of Christian leaders (Table 5). In the long run the shortage of leaders will seriously affect both the outreach and the spiritual maturity of the churches around the world.

TABLE 5
CHRISTIAN LEADERS, 1980

	National Leaders (thousands)	Foreign Leaders (thousands)	General Population per Leader
North America	755	22	1,300
Europe	1,014	46	105,000
Two-Thirds World	815	180	614,000

(from Barrett 1982)

What implications does globalization have for missions? First, we need to work further on rooting out colonial paternalistic survivals, whether these be in attitudes or in organization. We in North America are only one part of the Mennonite Brethren Church, and no longer the majority. And our oneness in Christ must transcend our national loyalties.

This means we must find new ways of relating as churches in different lands. At present the Board of Missions and Services is our liaison with conference leaders in other lands, but this too can be seen as paternalistic. As new conferences are formed, we need to build ties between their conference leaders and ours, their boards of reference and counsel and ours, and their boards of missions and ours.

This partnership should lead to mutual cooperation in mission outreach: in working toward international mission teams, joint mission projects, and mutual exhortation in the mission task. We are making a beginning in our cooperative efforts with Japan and India, and in the Curitiba consultation. We need, also, to assist our sister churches in developing mission programs and in training missionaries.

Second, we need to place high priority on developing leadership in our young churches. This is crucial both to their maturity and to their growth. Along with this, we need to recognize that globalization will blur the lines between home and foreign missions, and will challenge us to rethink the way we organize our outreach. In the past missions was ministry outside our Mennonite communities, and foreign mission was the highest priority. Today with the world moving to our doorsteps, there is a growing voice calling us to do missions at home. In 1970, to evangelize the Mien we would have had to send a missionary to Laos at great expense. Now those doors are closed, but we can evangelize many of them in Fresno, Visalia, and San Jose. If we are not careful, there will be increasing competition between home and foreign mission programs in our churches that can only hurt the mission cause (Toews). On a denominational level we need to reorganize our mission outreach in line with world realities so that there is coordination between our outreach abroad and at home.

A third consequence of globalization is growing ecumenism among evangelicals by means of networks and cooperative ventures rather than by bureaucratic organization. Clearly we need to work with other missions and churches. There is much we cannot do alone, and there is need to avoid wasteful duplication. We need, however, to choose our partners carefully, and affirm publicly our theological distinctives. Otherwise these ventures will be reduced to minimum common theological denominations, and to a diversion from our central calling.

Cultural sensitivity

The growing world awareness of culture and cultural differences, and of the social sciences that deal with them, is having a profound effect on missions. Three areas in missions, in particular, have been influenced by the social sciences. The first is strategizing for world evangelization. In the past, a high priority was placed on prayer and God's guidance. Today it is on "people groups," "homogeneous units," "receptivity," and "people movements." Sociological insights have, indeed, helped us understand how social dynamics influence the growth of the church, but there is great danger when human planning replaces God's guidance as the foundation for mission outreach.

The second area is contextualization. In the past, great emphasis was placed on the need for missionaries to identify with the cultures in which they served, and for missions to recognize and encourage the autonomy of young churches. Today the emphasis has shifted to contextualizing the gospel message itself, not only in translating it into other languages, but also adapting it to fit the worldview of local cultures. Here linguistics and anthropology have much to offer in helping us to communicate the gospel in ways people understand with their hearts as well as their minds. The danger is that we bend the gospel to fit the culture, and ignore its prophetic call to radical discipleship.

The third area is leadership. Today, more than technology, the West is using and exporting organizational management based on a mechanistic world view. Objectives, production, cost efficiency, and above all techniques and control are the unquestioned good. While all this can help us become more accountable in an age of extreme individualism, the danger is that planning replaces prayer, and humans replace God at the center of missions. As Mennonite Brethren, we are not unaffected by these trends in home and foreign missions, despite our theology of God's leading and of the church as a community of believers gifted and responsible to one another. We need to examine carefully the impact the social sciences are making on us, selecting those things that are best, but returning to our theological foundations for our mission work.

Pluralism

Increasingly the church in North America is facing the question of pluralism. As long as Hindus and Muslims lived in distant lands, it was easy for people here to hold to the uniqueness of Christ, and to call for their conversion. But now Hindus and Muslims are our neighbors and associates at work. Do we declare them lost and seek to convert them? And do they have a right to seek to win our children to Islam or Hinduism?

The initial effect of pluralism is to weaken those of our convictions which we have framed in absolutes, particularly religious absolutes. We must seek to understand our neighbors, and in understanding them we dare not call them wrong (Bloom) for we must love them. But this leads to relativism, an acceptance of Jesus as a way, not the only way. True love must be hard love, not simply positive regard. It must warn when danger is at hand, and judge when others are wrong.

Pluralism often leads to caste systems in which each group lives encapsulated within a larger sociocultural order. This is the simple solution to dealing with differences. But in a caste system none seek to recruit the others; and there is a minimum and regulation of intergroup relationships. There is no room for mission.

The other easy solution to pluralism is to seek some uniformity in a minimum common denominator, and to relegate differences to private opinion. We are one in our humanity, or Christianity, or Americanness. This, too, cuts the artery of missionary endeavors.

The difficult solution to pluralism is to take differences seriously, but to be free to convert one another. E. Stanley Jones pointed out that one of the most convincing evidences of the truth of the gospel is that it can stand any examination and comparison, and triumph.

As Mennonite Brethren, we must consciously deal with the pluralism we now face, or we will be in danger of losing our missionary spirit. We are no longer isolated communities. How then do we live in a pluralistic world and remain missionary? I believe the answer lies in part in a return to our understanding of the church as a counterculture, an outpost of the kingdom of God.

Urbanization

The cities are the mission challenge of the future. They are the centers that create and control the changes now taking place in the world. They are centers from which evil is spread (Ellul). They are also centers from which the gospel can spread, if we can reach them for Christ. The church and the Mennonite Brethren have come to realize this only belatedly.

How do we reach the city for Christ? Mennonite Brethren methods in missions and evangelism were developed in tribal and rural settings. The city is another kind of animal, and unless we understand it, we are in danger of using old methods, even if they are unsuccessful, simply because we know no better ones. It is not enough for Mennonite Brethren to shift our priorities to the cities. We need to study cities where we plan to work. We need to examine carefully the mission strategies we use to make certain they are appropriate for the urban context. And we need to learn from and work with other Christians working in cities. Any city is too large for any one church or denomination to evangelize.

Fundamentalist reaction

The fundamentalist reaction around the world is having a profound effect on missions. Much of the Muslim, Hindu, and Buddhist worlds are closing their doors to missionaries working directly in evangelism and church planting. Over 2.2 billion people now live with de facto restrictions on their religious freedom, and 3.1 billion live in nations where missionary entry is restricted or prohibited (Barrett 1982:5).

Clearly, we must explore new ways to proclaim the gospel in these lands. This may be by strengthening the hand of churches and Christians already in these countries, even though these may not be Mennonite Brethren. We have a precedent in this in our work with the African Independent Churches. Or it may be through partnerships with Mennonite Brethren churches in other lands. Japanese, Koreans, and especially Mexicans are welcome in countries closed to North American missionaries.

A second consequence of the fundamentalist reaction is conscious attempts in other religions to win Christian converts back into their folds. Often this is through preaching and mission outreach in Christian communities. Sometimes it takes more subtle forms. For example, in India the government gives educational grants and jobs to untouchables, but not to untouchables who have become Christians. It is highly profitable for Christians, therefore, to revert to Hinduism, particularly now that North American missions no longer subsidize education for Christians.

Increasingly the alternative to reconverting is open persecution. Barrett (1987:25) estimates that the number of Christian martyrs in 1986 was almost ten times the number in 1900. Christians are second-class citizens in many nations.

As Mennonite Brethren, we need to rethink our relationships with our sister churches in lands where there is subtle or open opposition to Christianity. What is our responsibility as North Americans for our Indian brothers and sisters who, already poor, lose the educational opportunities missions once offered them? It is too simple to say, in the name of self-support, that they must fund their own education. And what is our responsibility in China, or in other countries when persecution comes?

We need, also, to rethink missions in hostile environments. Should we be content to work only in low-risk settings?

Conclusion

So far we have examined some of the trends on the world scene and their implications for Christian missions. There is another set of forces affecting missions from within our churches in North America, including institutionalization and nominalism. Denominations and churches, like individuals, need to be renewed continually, otherwise they become ingrown, rigid, and irrelevant in a changing world. New planning for missions in view of the world's needs is of little use if we as a North American church do not experience the renewal of our spiritual life. The two go hand in hand. A dynamic mission in the world renews the church, and renewal revives the vision of mission.

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Response to "World Trends and Their Implications"

MARLIN E. MILLER

I am grateful to Paul Hiebert for a helpful, lucid, and pertinent summary of world trends and for several proposals concerning Mennonite Brethren missions which would be highly desirable or imperative in response to these trends. My response attempts to extend Paul's analysis and some of his almost marginal suggestions by first making a modest proposal, which may help us grapple with the seven trends and their implications. Second, I shall raise one additional question about the future of Mennonite Brethren missions which may deserve some attention in addition to the issues Paul focuses explicitly.

Seven separate trends or several dimensions of a common orientation?

Paul lists seven world trends which have implications for mission. Although he hints that some of these trends may be related to each other, he does not explicitly suggest that any of them may be organically related or that many of them may share a common frame of reference. I would like to suggest that at least several of the seven trends share a common orientation. Since the Enlightenment of the eighteenth century, Western culture and society have made an increasingly strong distinction between the public and the private spheres of life. The public sphere is largely monocultural and has been fundamentally shaped by empiricism, science, and technology. Moreover, the public sphere ostensibly remains neutral to religious and moral values which arise from particular commitments and faiths. In effect, however, the public sphere is either agnostic or implicitly atheistic.

The private sphere of life, in contrast, has become the home of cultural, religious, and moral commitments, and of individual preferences and behaviors. Within this realm, each person or each group may make its own choices, articulate its own commitments, and follow its own way of life. My "modest proposal" is therefore that awareness of this dichotomy between the private and the public spheres of life, which we have inherited from the Enlightenment, may help us sharpen our understanding of Hiebert's seven trends as well as help us respond more adequately to them in Christian mission.

In Hiebert's list, modernization constitutes the second world trend. Seen in the framework of the dichotomy between the public and private spheres of life, modernization is not simply one of several trends. Rather, it dominates the public sphere and fundamentally shapes the common public culture and society. For this reason, Hiebert's third trend, globalization, amounts to more than simply a worldwide network or "global village." Globalization extends modernization to global proportions. As Hiebert rightly points out, globalization is shattering Western domination in the world. For example, the Japanese are exercising major economic and technological influence in the contemporary international scene. But part of the reason that Western political and economic influence is being shattered is because the Japanese have become effective promoters and brokers of modernization. Thus the trend of globalization constitutes a globalization of modernity in the public sphere of contemporary world civilization.

The dichotomy between the public and the private spheres also puts several other world trends in a different light. Hiebert suggests a growing awareness of culture as the fourth trend. This trend may also need to be qualified as in effect having both public and private dimensions. In the public arena, the trend is toward a monocultural orientation. The particularities of different cultures are relegated to the private sphere. To return to the Japanese: most of them have adopted Western dress for business and public life, but slip into traditional kimonos and costumes at home and for ceremonial functions. This distinction between public and private culture would also have implications for mission strategy. Much of the discussion on "contextualization" in contemporary missiology focuses on the framework and particularities of a given cultural context without recognizing that it is referring primarily to issues that are usually encountered in the private sphere. Pluralism constitutes a challenge for Christian missions not only because people speaking different lan-

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Marlin Miller is professor of theology and president of Goshen Biblical Seminary, a member of the Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries in Elkhart, Indiana.

guages and practicing different religions live next door, but because religion, including Christianity, is also relegated to the private sphere of life. According to Hiebert, the seventh world trend with implications for Christian mission is the fundamentalist reaction. Interestingly, Hiebert refers only to other than Christian fundamentalist reactions. But whether Islamic or Christian, the fundamentalist reaction constitutes an attempt to reintegrate the public and the private spheres of life. For that reason, fundamentalism reacts against the acids of modernity and related trends. We might even go further and suggest that the Christian fundamentalist reaction seeks to reinstitute a Constantinian form of Christianity. And Islamic fundamentalism amounts to something of the same pattern in a different social, cultural, and religious context.

What difference does it make to see an organic relation between at least several of the seven trends? Part of the difference resides in developing a "canonical" rather than a "scatter shot" response to world trends for mission strategy. Again, Hiebert's paper makes several promising suggestions along the way. I would first like to refer to these suggestions, then propose a broader framework within which they may fit and the way in which they provide a biblical (and Anabaptist) integration of the public and private spheres.

Hiebert notes that we should add an understanding of biblical prophecy and of the movement of history to a social sciences projection of world trends in developing mission strategies. He also asserts that the gospel addresses material, social, and psychological needs, rather than being limited to narrowly spiritual ones. Hiebert further points out that oneness in Christ transcends national boundaries and therefore provides a Christian orientation in the response to globalization. Finally he both assumes and explicitly states that Mennonite Brethren would best return to an understanding of the church as a counterculture, as an outpost of the kingdom of God. I would suggest that putting all these clues together can provide a comprehensive vision which integrates the public and the private spheres in a way which differs from the traditional Constantinian patterns or their revival in contemporary fundamentalist reactions.

A "canonical" statement of the vision is provided in Ephesians 2:11ff. We may even think of this passage as summarizing the legacy of the great missionary apostle. At the beginning of Ephesians 3, we are told that this vision represents the "mystery of Christ" and that it was given to Paul by revelation. This mystery is described in the previous verses, namely the last half of chapter 2. It is the vision of a new corporate reality, a new humanity, a new people of God. This new humanity has been brought into being by the blood of Christ. In the body of Christ, people are brought into a new relation of peace with God and peace with each other, especially with those who were formerly enemies. Although we have frequently tried to separate public and private peace, peace as a public and social reality and peace as a personal relation with God, the vision of Ephesians 2 links both *directly* with the cross of Jesus Christ. Here is the vision of the people of God, the new humanity in the body of Christ as a counterculture which overcomes the dichotomy between the public and private spheres. It is a vision represented by the early Christian church, by the Anabaptists, and by others like the Harrist movement early in this century in the Ivory Coast.

Unlike the fundamentalist reaction, this way of integrating the public and the private spheres represents no new Constantinianism, primarily because it does not strive to impose its synthesis upon an entire society regardless of whether people do or do not confess Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. Just as Jesus Christ followed the way of the cross in the public as well as the private spheres, the church as the body of Christ rejects coercion and violence and accepts suffering in both the private and the public spheres in faithfulness to Jesus Christ. In other words, the "peace witness" traditionally related to Anabaptist and Mennonite views belongs at the heart of the gospel and at the center of what it means to be a missionary and reconciling body in the world. It is not simply a secondary matter restricted to conscientious objection to military service. It is not a dangling earring for cosmetic purposes. It helps give shape to the body itself. This may also speak to the first trend in Hiebert's list. He points out that the combination of increasing population and decreasing world resources will multiply conflicts and violence. If that is the case, peace and reconciliation are specific needs which the gospel addresses. And the comprehensive vision of Ephesians calls us back to grounding peace and reconciliation in the atonement itself rather than relegating it to a subsequent peculiarity of particular denominations. That also makes it part of evangelism and mission, not only of Christian moral discernment and instruction. So much for the modest proposal. The seven trends reflect a broader common frame of reference, which may be described as a foundational distinction between the public and the private spheres of life. The fundamentalist reaction, whether Christian or Islamic, seeks to integrate them in one way; the biblical and Anabaptist model in another way. If this proposal proves helpful, we may then wish to spin out some of the implications for mission strategies in the coming years.

An additional question

I would also like to raise a question which will have implications for Mennonite Brethren missions, but which the Hiebert paper does not address. Put most simply, what are the lifestyle trends, not only in the broader world, but among Mennonite Brethren around the world? Do they simply reproduce on a smaller scale the world trends? Are they somewhat similar? Or are there trends among Mennonite Brethren which, if not changed, will seriously hinder their missionary vocation in the coming decades? Are there trends which should be strengthened in order to support that missionary vocation?

These questions have no easy answers. It has, however, been my observation that missionaries tend to reproduce themselves and the churches from which they come, at least for the first decade of their missionary service (if not longer). If that is also the case for Mennonite Brethren missionaries, the current trends among Mennonite Brethren will also have far-reaching implications for the coming decades of Mennonite Brethren missions.

Strategies for Cross-Cultural Mission: Past/Present and Future

JACOB A. LOEWEN

I began my Christian witness as an ardent nondenominational soul-winner who constantly and consciously tried to hide his German Mennonite background. Next, I spent a decade plus as a self-replicating church builder. Then followed some thirty years of learning what it means to operate as a catalyst who is striving to improve his hearing of and his obedience to directives from God's Spirit. As I look back, I can testify that God added people to his family in all of my approaches; in fact, he even used some of my major blunders to do so.

For this reason, I do not consider the strategies I am evaluating critically as errors, but rather as stepping-stones in learning to discharge better our God-given responsibility in mission. Nor do I consider the catalyst strategy ultimate; it, too, is probably just another milepost in growing obedience.

Focus of this paper

The assigned focus of this paper is strategy—how can we successfully discharge our mission responsibility toward the world in which we find ourselves faced with the megachallenges of the future? We begin our task by reviewing past/present mission strategies in terms of three central thrusts or orientations, somewhat simplified, and then proceed to recommend modifications that should help us meet even the most exigent demands of the future.

Strategies focused on "soul-winning"

This rubric includes more than just a single homogeneous approach, but all the approaches discussed are based on one central thrust—"to produce personal decisions for Christ."

Short-term witnessers

The short-term witnessing approaches sponsored by various church or para-church organizations usually provide a short period of training for young people who volunteer to go to other cultures "to witness for Christ" for a period of weeks or months, usually less than a year. A significant portion of such training programs involves building up enthusiasm for the task in the would-be witnessers. Next there is instruction in a variety of "instant" witnessing techniques, usually based on some form of "canned" messages like the *Four Spiritual Laws*, designed to quickly and systematically lead witnessees to make a "decision for Christ." "Graduates" from such training programs are then sent to overseas destinations, usually cosmopolitan cities, individually or in teams. Here they seek out potential witnessees with whom they can communicate. Trainees rarely have the fluency in the target language required for effective, intimate communication such as witnessing about one's faith and one's Christian experience. Most North American short-term witnessers expect to communicate by means of English because "so many young people all over the world are learning English and really love to practice it." Such witnessers, limited as they are to using their own home language, often overlook the fact that the persons to whom they witness in overseas situations seldom have more than an elementary grasp of the language which is being used to convert them. There is also little emphasis on the need for trainees to become conscious of the limitations their "home" culture imposes upon their faith, the many presuppositions underlying their faith and their witness, and the clichés in which they express their faith. Usually their training includes little or no instruction in the values, worldview, and thought patterns of the people to whom they are to witness.

Such short-term witnessers usually are fully convinced that they have the whole truth, and that they are communicating nothing but the truth. They approach the biblical message as a-cultural and view their message as culture- and language-free and thus applicable to any person anywhere. They usually operate on the assumption that "a decision for Christ" or a "conversion experience" will axiomatically change the new converts' values and lifestyle and that converts will instantly inherit a full-fledged model of what it means to live a Christian life. This approach sees little need for an indigenous social context or a "fellowship of believers" within which new converts will receive help to "grow in grace," or in which they can learn to obey the broader scope of dictates found in God's Word.

Such short-term witnessers often have grown up in Christian contexts and are completely oblivious of how they developed their model of the Christian life. They assume that all overseas witnessees who make a decision for Christ automatically have within themselves all that it takes "to live for Christ." Seldom do they recognize that new converts in a different culture may require extensive resocializing in order to master biblical patterns of Christian behavior. In fact, such witnessers usually are unconscious of the fact that before isolated converts can be resocialized as Christians, there must already exist a fairly well-defined model of what a Christian life in that cultural setting entails.

Such short-term witnessers, more often than not, operate outside of any local church context which could provide the setting for fellowship, for Christian role rehearsal, and as an ongoing source of input and help for the converts' continued growth in faith. Where they do operate within a church context, their witness will, of course, be of much more lasting value.

Such short-term witnessers are seldom cognizant of the fact that it is possible to make a premature "decision for Christ," that is, a decision made without fully comprehending its long-term implications. Nor do they realize that such premature "decisions for Christ" can serve as "immunization" against a genuine conversion to Christ. In fact, even if the converts make a genuine decision for

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Jacob Loewen has been a missionary to Colombia for ten years, a university professor, cultural broker, and translator consultant with the American and United Bible Societies, Clearbrook, British Columbia.

Christ at the time of their original profession of faith but are then left to their own resources long before they have found an adequate context for further growth, they often become disillusioned and undergo the experience which Jesus described in the parable of the seed scattered among the thorns and thistles—such people may become severely disillusioned, if not completely "gospel shy," following their premature commitment and subsequent backsliding. The greatest value of short-term witnessing is for the witnessers themselves. First, the more sensitive among them will become at least partially aware of the complexity of the task of meaningful cross-cultural witnessing, and next, it permits those interested in mission to make a much more intelligent assessment of whether or not God has called them to the missionary task.

Government contract missions

A second variety of the soul-winning approach includes Christian groups who work under contracts with governments or governmental agencies. Such contracts usually preclude involvement in the development of local churches. Certain agricultural or development-oriented groups or highly focused mission groups like SIL/WBT, are examples of this subtype. Especially if such groups work in tribes or situations in which there is no existing church or in which no other mission organization is working to establish a Christian church, their efforts likewise may often lead to unintentionally "immunizing" converts against Christianity. Unlike short-termers, missionaries in this category learn the local language adequately and they also develop excellent facility in the target culture and as a result they often are very successful in leading individuals to accept Christ. However, since they are unable to organize local churches, they often create only series of individual converts, or at best, small groups of converts who remain as islands orphaned from any church context in which they could be resocialized and helped to grow in grace. As a result of the failure to develop the necessary supporting context, these individuals often fall away one by one or are swept away as a group by some religious ism.

In one such tribe there were no active believers left by the time the published New Testament in the tribal language arrived on the field. The mission which subsequently undertook to develop a church among these people found that the tribe as a whole had been thoroughly case-hardened against the gospel—"they had tried it and had found that it didn't work."

Faith missions (pseudodenominational missions)

A third variety of the soul-winning approach involves many of the so-called "faith missions." Like the earlier two varieties, faith missions usually also operate primarily on the premises of individual decisions for Christ, and view the biblical gospel as largely culture-free, but in contrast, they often view the tribal culture, especially tribal religion, as being largely "of the devil" and thus to be destroyed. Unlike the earlier groups, however, faith missionaries usually do establish local fellowships or even churches and in this respect their work is much more whole. However, as members of interdenominational or nondenominational faith missions, the missionaries of a given mission usually come from a wide variety of church backgrounds and often each missionary establishes a fellowship resembling his/her own home experience. Even where such missions establish a common network of churches, these new churches have no local counterparts to whom they can relate for cross-cultural fellowship and as a source of help in times of need. Hence the subtitle "pseudodenominational." Yes, these faith missions do establish churches—at worst each missionary develops his own individual "denomination" and at best they form a single *new* denomination for the entire mission. Thus what functions as an interchurch faith mission at home becomes a separate new denomination (or denominations) on the mission field, thus magnifying the problem of Christian pluralism decried by Kasdorf and Hiebert.

"Faith mission" missionaries (and also many denominational missionaries) often view the believers they win to the Lord as their personal "spiritual offspring," and feel responsible to determine every detail of their doctrine and their practice within the new church. In terms of Kasdorf's paper such missions are unwitting but ardent promoters of denominational pluralism. Furthermore, these churches are more or less spiritual orphans on the global church scene, for just as a social context is important for individual growth, so international church relationships provide the growth context for church organizations.

A further problem of many faith missions lies in the training of national leadership. Since there is no older established mother church with training institutions and seminaries, and since the missionaries themselves often lack advanced studies, they tend to be somewhat education-shy. The result is that their national church leadership often is unable to acquire the prerequisite training to develop truly autonomous indigenous churches who are able to develop their own meaningful biblical theology and operational methodology for coping with the problems of culture change which conversion to Christianity usually produces.

Self-replicating strategies (denominational missions)

This approach is characteristic of denominational churches who train some of their own members to go overseas to replicate their home church in other cultures. Like the earlier mentioned "faith missions," denominations likewise are often tempted to see themselves as the best example of a people following God's truth. Thus getting someone to accept their "truth package" (which usually includes large segments of the home culture wrapper) is seen as the God-ordained task of the missionaries and of the church that sends and supports them.

As in the soul-winning model, the self-replicating strategy accepts soul-winning as primary, but "accepting Christ" in this strategy is always synonymous with becoming what the missionary is—a Mennonite, a Presbyterian, a Baptist, etc. Because the denominational gospel package contains not only the biblical gospel, but also many elements imported from the home church practice and the home culture of the missionaries, these denominational missionaries are faced with the formidable task of teaching the new converts both an extensive doctrinal package and a large body of church practices characteristic of the sending church. In their teaching approach such missionaries often present not only the "rightness" of their denominational doctrines, but often also stress the "wrongness" of other denominational views. Because so many alien cultural elements are involved in such models, the indoctrination process is an unusually long one. Missionaries, by very definition, are the only knowledgeable teachers of these models. As a result they are usually forced into key roles in the new church to keep it functioning properly, especially in such areas as democratic elections, Western styles of dispensing justice, and church discipline.

On the plus side, the self-replicating/church planting strategy does provide the young churches with a network of other churches with which to relate. Usually they also receive help to develop training institutions for local leadership on the field and more qualified individuals also receive exposure to and training in foreign countries. This often makes the local leadership more culturally aware and thus better equipped to develop contextualized Christianity.

In the postcolonial era of Western overseas missionary efforts, using the sword overtly as an instrument of evangelization was no longer acceptable; though I think it is fair to say that both Catholic and Protestant-controlled governments often used their power to keep competing faiths out of the territories they controlled.

However, most Protestant missions employed several subtler forms of coercion, or at least baited hooks, over many decades in their self-replicating mission efforts. The term "rice Christians" typifies these subtler forms of coercion, which involved providing material benefits, education, medical services, or the like to converts. The approaches I have earlier termed "soul-winning," however, often refuse to become involved in social programs beyond medicine and education, because they view them as being part of the social gospel and, as such, not a part of the great commission. All of these groups, however, frequently still stoop to psychological coercion, as when preachers threaten people with hell fire in the hereafter during evangelistic campaigns.

In recent years these self-replicating denominational churches and even many faith mission soul-winning groups have begun to yield to pressures to develop broader whole person concerns, but as late as Lausanne (1974) the majority were still very fearful of becoming contaminated by the so-called social gospel.

Like faith missions in the soul-winning strategy, so the more recent church growth emphasis represents a great improvement on the basic self-replicating strategy. Church growth stresses indigeneity, contextualization, greater whole-person involvement, etc. However, if our North American church scene is an example of the ultimate church growth product, then we may be in for serious disappointment. Some of our fastest growing Mennonite Brethren churches in North America are requiring so great a share of their resources at home that both home and foreign missions, schools and seminaries—in fact, all broader outreach efforts—are in danger of being choked off.

Even though we have pointed out some of the shortcomings of the soul-winning and the self-replicating strategies, we consider both of them to have valid features that must be an integral part of any successful strategy, present or future: sinners must be born again, Christians must witness, new churches must be established, established churches must send out missionaries, etc. More about this later.

The catalyst strategy

Unlike the earlier two strategies which have always assumed that the non-Christian world is "without God," a first premise of the catalyst strategy is that God and his Spirit do not arrive on the mission scene when the missionary arrives. God is seen as always having been there and his Spirit has been working there long before the arrival of the first missionary. Instead of focusing on the depravity of man, as is usual in the earlier two strategies, a second premise of this strategy is that there exists "that of God" in every person and in every culture. All people everywhere were created by God in his own image, and though marred by sin, "that of God" in persons makes them redeemable, and "that of God" in culture makes it a useful vehicle for building the church of Jesus Christ in it. Christian mission thus is seen as the process of developing "that of God" in individuals and in the society as a whole.

In agreement with the other two strategies, this approach sees all persons as having "that of sin" within them. For this reason, soul-winning or conversion are stressed. Conversion is seen as the conscious choice of a person to shake off the bondage of "that of sin" and to embark on a road to develop "that of God" in his or her life. Such spiritual development, in Western church jargon often called "growth in grace" or "sanctification," is a lifelong process. There may be dramatic crisis points at which a person achieves some major breakthrough, but there also can be significant setbacks in which "that of sin" gains the upper hand for periods of time. The catalyst strategy sees itself called to constantly address "that of God" in others, both Christian and non-Christian, to encourage them to hear and obey the voice of God's Spirit.

Furthermore the catalyst strategy expects that "that of God" in the new converts' culture will make it possible for such converts to depend on the known mechanisms of their own culture to develop truly indigenous churches which in turn will provide the resocializing and growth context for the individual believer's ongoing development. In this approach it will not be necessary for new converts to learn the operating procedures of the missionary's home church, because these elements will all be supplied by the local culture.

Since culture, too, has "that of sin" in it, this approach looks to the new church to address both "that of God" and "that of sin" in the culture in order to bring about all the culture changes necessary to make the social context an instrument of building God's kingdom. It is in this exercise that much of the contextualization takes place.

This approach expects that the gospel will be "good news" to every recipient. In other words, the gospel will be proclaimed in such a way that it relates to the felt needs of persons and cultures. It need not necessarily be presented within the theological framework developed by the missionary's home church.

The preceding assertion is based on the assumption that a people's culture embraces all of that people's life and that a truly functional religion, like most traditional religions, must therefore be operative in all spheres of a people's life. It recognizes the importance of personal salvation and of the preparation for the hereafter, but it does not emphasize them at the expense of a life of faith in the here and now. It constantly operates with a truly whole-person, all-of-life perspective.

Based on these premises, the missionary catalyst helps precipitate given events, decisions, etc., in which individuals and groups decide to take steps in obedience to God's design, but as soon as the action/reaction begins, the missionary himself becomes obsolete. In other words, foreign missionaries have only a "passing" role to play in the witnessee's personal life and in the life of the indigenous church.

Jesus and the Samaritan woman needed only a few minutes of talking together before "that of God" in the woman responded. Furthermore, the larger Samaritan community which responded to the woman's appeal needed Jesus' input for only a few days (John 4). Later this Samaritan community needed Philip, the evangelist, for a short period, and still later, it needed Peter and John's input for an additional couple of days (Acts 8).

Paul's evangelism, likewise, was of this type. His longest stay seems to have been two years at Ephesus (Acts 19:20) and in Rome where he was a prisoner for a couple of years (Acts 28:30-31).

Catalysts in action

The catalyst is aware that while usually his function is ended as soon as the action/reaction sets in, there may be occasions where he is needed for either a short-term involvement or for a series of catalytic involvements over a short period of time, but he scrupulously avoids becoming a major player on the local stage.

Individuals and groups are often unable to identify their true need without a "mirror." The needs people express often are not their real needs and thus the catalyst must provide the necessary mirror function, e.g., Jesus and the Samaritan woman (John 3), or Jesus and Nicodemus (John 4).

Another function of the catalyst is that of being a source of alternatives when a group searches for solutions to a recognized problem or need, e.g., Wirsche and Loewen helping the Choco Church find answers to the problem of educating believers and believers' children in the early days of the church.

In the case of such whole-person, all-of-life approaches the missionary may also have to function as the culture-broker who puts local people in touch with other church or nonchurch organizations which can be of help in solving problems or meeting local needs.

A further function of the catalyst is that of "friend of the court," with whom a person or a group can "unload" failures or disappointments without feeling self-conscious or fearing recrimination, e.g., Jesus and the woman caught in adultery (John 8).

The catalyst strategy believes that contextualized indigenous church development is an absolute must, but it assumes a much humbler stance than many current indigenous church-building thrusts manifest. It recognizes its own partial knowledge of the truth and expects the church in each new culture not only to develop its own meaningful expression of the Christian faith, but also to enrich the church of Jesus Christ as a whole. Because the catalyst approach takes its own ethnocentrism seriously, it encourages a "learner" attitude in all its emissaries. It expects the local church to contribute to the sending church as much, if not more, than it receives from the latter. It is also willing to cooperate in meeting felt needs of the people to be evangelized or to be helped in their spiritual development, even when it feels that the approach taken by an indigenous individual or group is mistaken. When something actually does turn out to be a mistake, it does not gloat—"we told you so"—it identifies with the local church in its embarrassment or suffering and seeks to be a source of alternatives in the search for a better solution to the problem.

Projecting mission strategies into the future

If we are to meet the challenge of the future as presented by Hiebert and Kasdorf, we must of necessity work on the basis of strategies that will help us maximize our resources and permit us to accomplish the task God has entrusted to us.

A quick review of the three strategies of the past which we have presented reveals the following: The practitioners of the soul-winning model viewed the mission task as getting "people to accept Christ." It looked upon other cultures as utterly "pagan," but saw individuals as redeemable. This strategy had little or nothing to say about social and material concerns, because its eyes were fixed on getting people saved here and now so that they would be ready to enter a blessed hereafter.

The practitioners of the self-replicating (church planting) model usually shared the basic values of the soul-winning strategy, but in addition, they put much effort into developing local churches. Furthermore, because missionaries usually had long-term involvement with a people, they often became involved in at least a minimum of here-and-now concerns, like health, education, etc. However, such involvement was usually only tolerated as a means of "winning people for Christ." In some cases such services functioned largely as baited hooks to attract new converts, rather than as essential expressions of the new life of all true followers of Jesus Christ.

What we have said about transplanting churches was often even more true in the case of mission hospitals and schools. Missionary medical practitioners seldom learned about local medicines or local medical practices. As a result they were unable to help the local society to develop an improved indigenous medical program that the local church could finance and operate. Schools likewise were more or less transplants from the West and thus alien in the local society.

Both of the preceding strategies usually come with ready-made doctrines and established agendas. This limits their flexibility and sensitivity to locally felt need and often handicaps them in the contextualization of the gospel. They also fall short in whole-person, all-of-life concerns and this limits their scope and their daily life value to the recipients. Both strategies contribute heavily to denominational pluralism and tend to encourage sectarian divisiveness. As a result their missionaries find it very hard to share the good news with people of other religious faiths on a genuine friendship basis.

On the other hand, I think it is fair to assert that the catalyst strategy has had only very limited application in missions in the past. In the MB situation it was used in the establishment of the IEU among the Choco people in Panama and Colombia. The Eastern Mennonite Board (Salunga) used it in part in Tanzania. The Mennonite Church (Elkhart) has been using it for a good number of years in their work with the IEU among the Toba and related tribes in Argentina and more recently with the African Independent Churches (AIC) in several African countries. It is being used in a number of areas by Mennonite Central Committee appointees who collaborate with local indigenous churches, but beyond that I have seen it used in only a few other instances and usually only in very partial applications. It is my deep conviction that it is a valid and worthwhile strategy and that it should receive serious consideration as a general strategy for future mission.

In contrast to the first two strategies, the catalyst strategy does not approach the task with a complete, ready-made agenda. It requires the missionary to learn the ins and outs of the local situation, to discover locally felt need, and to respond to it in ways that are applicable and understandable to the target culture. The mission agenda always arises out of the target situation.

Unlike the self-replicating model, which imports much of its church structures from abroad, under the catalyst model the local church itself assumes full responsibility for contextualizing the gospel, and the catalyst's role is to keep on encouraging the local group to put its cultural thinking and practice under the scrutiny of the Word and to look to God's Spirit for guidance. Where the church needs alternatives, the catalyst tries to suggest them; usually, however, the catalyst merely precipitates acts of obedience to God's Word or God's Spirit.

What I as a convinced Mennonite find so exciting is that, to my mind, this catalytic model exhibits some of the distinctive characteristics of the strategy the Anabaptists used during the Reformation. The Anabaptists stressed that no pope, governor, or religious authority had the right to impose a religion or to force acceptance of any belief system on anyone. The decision to enter the "kingdom of God" was to be personal and voluntary. Furthermore, such a decision did not mean merely blind adherence to a given faith, it meant a commitment to study God's Word for increased "light" and to a continuing life of obedience to God and of service to one's fellows. Thus the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5—7) and account of the last judgment (Matt. 25) provided some of the most determinative patterns for the Christian life of the early Anabaptists.

The catalyst strategy differs fundamentally from the other two strategies. It basically sees God at work even in pagan societies and therefore it accepts not only the individual as redeemable, but also his or her culture itself is viewed as a useful vehicle for helping the church of Jesus Christ in that specific cultural setting to function effectively.

So far we have emphasized only the positive elements of the catalyst strategy. It is not without problems. The problems associated with this strategy, to my mind, have two basic sources: (1) the catalyst himself and (2) the indigenous setting.

A first problem connected with the catalyst himself arises out of the latter's insecurity and/or incomplete obedience to God (the grain of wheat often doesn't want to fall into the ground and die)(John 12:24). Since catalysts become obsolete as soon as the action/reaction is set in motion, they get little or no personal credit or reward. This is difficult for us success-hungry Westerners. Consider the biblical example of John the Baptist. He was the catalyst who ushered Jesus onto the world stage. When Jesus then began to minister, his popularity increased rapidly, while John's faded fast. This greatly upset John's disciples, but John, the catalyst, saw it as a God-given necessity (John 3:25-30).

A further problem grows out of the average Western missionary's difficulty in hearing the "still small voice" of God's Spirit. Our mechanico-material worldview has severely stunted our capacity to believe in and to follow the Spirit consistently. As a result, we often miss strategic directives from him, and when this happens we become hindrances in God's work (Matt. 16:21-23; for a personal testimony see *MBH* 7 Feb:2, 5, 7, 1975).

Closely related is the problem of power and control. We Westerners feel most comfortable when we are fully in charge. The catalyst should never be really "in charge," but in slow-moving consensus societies, temptations for the power-hungry to bring things to a head are many.

The problems arising out of the indigenous situation likewise are largely human problems. In every group of believers there are those who would like to seize control or at least get a lion's share of the benefits. Often such persons are able to stymie the indigenous group in its attempts to follow the Spirit's leading. They create deviations, divisions, and sometimes they even destroy the group itself. A further problem is our innate human attraction to the "things of this world." A religion that relates to all of life also deals with man's material needs. But human greed and desire for a bigger share of the material comfort pie often lead to the stifling or at least serious hindering of spiritual growth both in the individual and in the indigenous church as a whole. For me personally, the lack of evangelistic zeal of many of the churches built on the self-replicating model has been a matter of grave concern. Often this is accompanied by one-man or one-power clique-type leadership. Only those who fully support the leader participate in the benefits. All others tend to be frozen out.

In observing the IEU in its 28 years of development one becomes aware of another problem—namely, erratic or very uneven growth. At different times the emphases on education, economic development, health concerns, etc., seemed to achieve a monopoly on the church's attention. However, time and again it has been gratifying to see that the group itself recognized the imbalance and then proceeded to correct it. The biggest temptation for me personally in my relationship with the IEU was to reach in and to prevent such imbalances. Had I been on the scene all the time, I think I probably would have interfered.

Where is the catalytic approach most needed today?

This strategy is needed especially in all those contexts in which group response is the most usual way to react to new ideas. Since most of the two-thirds world still can and does operate on consensus either at the family, clan, or even tribal level, a group response to the Christian message will be the most likely there. In addition, such an approach will also be most likely to produce viable indigenous Christian churches because the local social context is enlisted from the very beginning. In the Mennonite Brethren experience, the IEU in Panama among the Choco Indians exemplifies this.

It may also be instructive to note that the IEU joined the Mennonite Brethren family of churches and the world Mennonite community only after it had developed the maturity to make a conscious decision to that effect. Today it probably is more Anabaptist than many MB churches in North America.

A second area needing this approach are the many independent indigenous movements that are springing up on the periphery of Christian missions and Christian churches in the two-thirds world. If David Barrett's statistics are correct, then seven out of ten Christian conversions in Africa today are within AIC contexts. Furthermore he says that we now have some tens of thousands of such indigenous religious movements in Africa alone. Many of these AIC's desperately need and are openly welcoming the help of catalysts.

One Mennonite missionary in Ghana related to scores of prophets from dozens of AIC's in the Accra area. Some prophets needed to become literate, others needed biblical instruction on certain topics, still others wanted to know whether the Bible had something to say about issues they were facing. This missionary always remained at "arm's length" to the actual AIC's and had absolutely no control either over the leaders or over the groups that sought her help, yet she stimulated dozens of "prophets" and numerous churches to take steps in obedience to God's Word and to the leading of God's Spirit.

A third area where this strategy is needed are those areas in which churches, originally established on the basis of the soul-winning or the self-replicating strategies, now feel a need to develop whole-person and all-of-life concerns. An example would be the MB Church in India which has recently formed the Mennonite Brethren Development Organization and which is now dazzled by the success of its first outreach ventures. There is real danger that social and economic concerns will now overshadow, only temporarily I hope, the church growth dimension. Genuine catalytic expatriate input, I think, will be welcome there.

Summarizing, the catalyst strategy does not regard the first two strategies as irrelevant or invalid. In fact, it recognizes their valid features and applies them as integral parts of the catalyst approach.

The catalyst strategy and the problems of the future

In this section we highlight a number of future concerns raised in the Hiebert/Kasdorf papers and then comment on how the catalyst strategy relates to them.

Flexibility

The futurologists predict a world of rapidly changing conditions which will require utmost flexibility, even to the anticipating of changes. Since the catalyst strategy begins with locally felt need and, indeed, the mirror function clarifies whether the need is an actual need, it should be able to meet the demands of flexibility. Furthermore, it also stresses the catalyst's utter dependence on the leading of God's Spirit, who, as the book of Acts shows, is "flexible" often beyond human comprehension.

Indigeneity and contextualization

Political and religious nationalism in most of the world no longer permit the wholesale transplanting of Western church models into the third world. This frustrates many would be church planters. However, the catalyst strategy does not depend on imported models or ready-made agendas. Since it seeks to stimulate "that of God" in individuals and in cultures, it encourages both indigenous patterns and contextualized values and designs.

Religious pluralism

Massive migrations have created religious pluralism in most of the world, and now the awakening of religious expansionism in non-Christian religions is greatly increasing it. Because catalytically oriented missionaries begin with "that of God" in other persons, religions, and cultures, they can often function as mirrors which reveal the voids and inadequacies of other approaches and thus they can often become potent witnesses for Christ and the Scriptures on the basis of *solicited* (1 Pet. 3:15) witnessing.

Denominational pluralism

Catalyst strategy assumes that missionaries "know only in part" (1 Cor. 13) and that they, therefore, must avoid doctrinal rigidity and manifest flexibility. This makes it possible for them to fellowship with other groups. Such fellowship in turn provides opportunities to learn to communicate in the "dialects" of different churches. Such "intimate" communication reduces mutual suspicions about competition and permits increasing relationships and cooperation, e.g., the missionary cited earlier, who related to more than fifty AIC prophets and to dozens of separate AIC's, helped them to become aware of each other and, in many cases, also to relate to each other. The catalyst feels little need to attach his or her own denominational label, for her or his first concern is building the church of Jesus Christ.

Need to relate to systemic problems

Mennonites have traditionally always rushed to aid the victims of abuse. In the imagery of the good Samaritan, they have always been ready and eager to help the person who fell among the thieves. They have traditionally avoided relating to the thieves. In view of the massive economic and social problems engendered by world systems, like multinational corporations, Western control of world monetary resources, etc., Mennonite Brethren must learn to witness to abusive power structures and be catalysts which produce relief for the poor and the oppressed.

Putting social sciences to use

Missions have become very aware of the social sciences and of anthropology in particular. Social science tools are basic to catalyst strategy. By means of them catalysts understand the local cultural situation both as to structure and process. They also provide catalysts with insights into possible solutions to locally felt needs.

Crisis in resources

The catalyst strategy relates to problems in a number of ways: (1) The good catalyst will be able to function catalytically in the home church setting as well as abroad. (2) Since programs will be target-culture based and operated, there will be less call to finance costly transplanted mission-run institutions. (3) Since this strategy is whole-person and all-of-life, it often can enlist nonchurch monies, like CIDA in the development of the IEU and the MBDO in India. (4) Also see below on MBs abroad in nonmission settings.

Dwindling personnel

Hiebert decries the decrease in long-term missionaries. The catalyst strategy is actually based on fewer missionaries in a given area and shorter-term involvement. However, there is also an increasing number of well-equipped dedicated MBs working overseas in nonmission situations. Many of these would qualify for catalytic involvement if the church/mission enlisted and nurtured them.

Increase in war, violence, and terrorism

Many of the terrorist acts and revolutionary wars result from a feeling of total exclusion from existing power structures. The catalyst strategy works to increase local personal and cultural self-respect, and especially in nonviolent Mennonite hands it could help provide nonviolent alternatives in difficult situations, e.g., Quaker behind-the-scenes diplomatic negotiations for the independence of Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Ideological idols

A futures concern not addressed in the Kasdorf/Hiebert papers is the growing dominance achieved by "ideological idols." Goudzwaard (1981) has effectively shown that the most seductive false gods of our time and of the foreseeable future are powerful ideas, rather than deity images made of wood or precious metals. The ideas themselves are not evil, but when they are elevated to the status of supreme values and ultimate truths to which people dedicate their lives, then they become nothing less than idols—ideological idols.

Among the powerful ideas which receive current homage, he discusses revolution, nationalism, material prosperity, and guaranteed security. That these ideas are claiming the allegiance not only of non-Christians, but also of vast segments of Christianity itself, cannot be disputed. And when ideas like German and Japanese nationalism during World War II become supreme truths—gods, if you will—to which people render total allegiance, then any means which will further the "will of this god" (including the extermination of millions of Jews in Europe and modern terrorism) become divinely sanctioned activities.

When idol worship of this kind is attacked frontally, its virulence merely increases. Here again, the catalyst strategy based on felt need offers some hope. It assumes that the loyalty to the ideology is based on some deeply felt unmet need. Thus it seeks to discover that need and to meet it with the gospel. Once the underlying need is met, then the attraction of the ideological idol vanishes. Thus when repressed and enslaved people, who have no access to power, discover that they can become first-class sons and daughters of God and that his Spirit—the power that created and upholds the universe—is at their disposal, then the attraction of these man-made ideologies will usually wither on the vine.

Concluding appeal

"Let us not grow tired of doing good, for, unless we throw in our hand, the ultimate harvest is assured. Let us then do good to all men as opportunity offers. . . " (Gal. 6:9-10, Phillips).

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Response to "Strategies for Cross-Cultural Mission"

PETER M. HAMM

Introduction

Jacob Loewen's participation in this consultation allows us to benefit from his many years of cross-cultural experience in other than Mennonite settings. As a result, we are enriched by his sensitivity to the non-North American scene, his analytical insights as a social scientist, his love for God and the church, and his creative imagination and gift for communication.

Commendable features of the paper

1. I welcome Loewen's paper, because I view it as a necessary and prophetic corrective at a critical time in our own mission history when we are about to set the direction for the subsequent decade. Along with Loewen, I lament our tendency to join the bandwagon of those Western missions which see it their mandate to "evangelize the world in this generation" (to use the watchword of the Student Volunteer Movement). Not that there is something wrong with the watchword, but there is something wrong if it becomes the task of only the western church. Loewen cautions us implicitly against assuming the mandate belongs primarily to the church of the West. Instead of simply enhancing our recruitment techniques and increasing the number of Western missionaries and the ill-prepared short-termers, we need to allow the Holy Spirit to unleash the vast resources among God's people now scattered among the 223 political units of the world, as we have seen happen in recent years in the most surprising places (USSR, China, Angola, Mozambique, and Ethiopia—Marxist countries with very limited foreign missionary activity).

2. He salvages the good elements of some not-so-good strategies. Hence, it cannot be said that he opposes "soul-winning" and "church planting." It is how these come about, or do not come about, that concerns him. Loewen incorporates these necessary missional components into his catalyst strategy.

3. He optimistically sees potential for the church of the future, in spite of the "chilling" picture presented by Hiebert and Kasdorf. He capitalizes upon the fact of the presence of God's people in most, if not all, countries of the world and seeks to mobilize the largest numbers of Christian witnesses—however, not necessarily North Americans. Loewen makes a strong case for becoming "world Christians" and recognizing world Christians elsewhere. His paper should not be viewed as a negative approach.

4. He maximizes the potential for witness by recognizing the "that of God" in humankind and becoming sensitive to, and responding to, the felt needs of humanity. By appealing to the image of God in humankind, Loewen does not minimize the need for the "special" revelation in Christ which gives to the Christian faith its unique dimension. Loewen does, however, recognize that the Spirit of God is at work long before a missionary arrives on the scene.

5. He identifies the following essential components of mission theology and practice:
- the good news of the gospel which is freeing and forgiving;
- the full-orbed gospel which addresses all of human needs—physical, social, environmental, and spiritual;
- the importance of the larger Christian community, rather than the Western models and structures in arbitrary and arrogant fashion;
- the spontaneous emergence of Christian beliefs and practices, unhindered in their contextualizing process.

Some reservations and questions

1. By grouping the short-termers, the tentmakers (who work under governments or for corporations), and the "faith missions" as representative of the "soul-winning" types, does Loewen not do violence to the individual components? While they all may believe in "soul-winning," do they not in fact do much more? Would these mission groups not object to Loewen's stereotypes? And would the "faith missions" not fit more the self-replicating modes? In his reply, Loewen corrects my deduction that he is referring to tentmakers. He explicitly has in mind mission agencies, like SIL/WBT, working under government contracts, not tentmakers who are individually employed by governments and who in fact can be catalysts. Moreover, he maintains that "faith missions" are not denominations and in that sense are not replicating the denominational mold.

2. Despite the weaknesses of denominationalism, as long as we represent our denominations here in North America, are we not simply being honest by acknowledging our affiliations? I tacitly accept Sidney Mead's definition of a denomination as "a voluntary association of like-hearted and like-minded individuals, who are united on the basis of common beliefs for the purpose of accomplishing tangible and defined objectives." Certainly denominationalism is much preferable to rank individualism, and the diversity of human cultures and understandings militate against a uniform organization

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Peter M. Hamm, Winnipeg, Manitoba, is executive secretary of Mennonite Brethren Missions/Service for Asia, Northern Europe, and Africa.

worldwide, however ideal that may seem. I realize Loewen does not argue against denominations, but against the wholesale exportation of our denominational divisiveness. We have observed that where our missionaries played down their Anabaptist heritage in favor of mere evangelicalism, nationals have pushed them to explain their heritage and exhorted them for failing to share their faith distinctive. In his reply, Loewen admits some advantage to denominational distinctives, but emphasizes that such teachings should not further divide us from other Christians. As soon as a group becomes fully "like-minded," it becomes a mutual admiration society and sees others as wrong, rather than seeing people at different stages of development or attracted by different facets of truth. This was a helpful modification by Loewen.

3. By grouping Mennonite Brethren among the self-replicating "church planting" types, is Loewen not distorting the reality of Mennonite Brethren mission? Certainly MBs are also of the "soul-winning" type, and surely they also have their catalysts. Perhaps we simply do not feel comfortable with being stereotyped as one kind. Loewen admits that he has lumped the MBs with other denominations in order to make a point.

4. Loewen refers solely to the emergence of the Iglesia Evangelica Unida (IEU) of Panama in terms of MB models of the catalytic strategy. Is he adequately informed of other successful catalytic models where MBs have been involved, such as the African Independent Churches (AICs) in Botswana (through AIMM), the Mennonite Muria Synod of Indonesia (through PIPKA), or the presence of G. W. Peters or John N. Klassen at Freie Hochschule für Mission in Korntal, West Germany? This paints the picture larger. It is true that MBs were reluctant to enter the work among AICs and failed to respond initially. However, other Mennonite groups responded. He probably correctly notes that we were willing to go under the AIMM umbrella because we "were not willing to accept that strategy." He notes, "The Panama situation is the only model where a work has been conducted along these lines all the way and I don't think I am stretching the truth."

5. Is the catalytic strategy the only model for the future? Is there not some room for a confrontational, proclamatory witness, such as Paul also engaged in? By observing only the catalytic strategy, are we not abdicating our role in taking the initiative to those people groups yet unreached? In responding to Alle Hoekema of the Netherlands who lamented the importation of North American denominationalism, I was recently asked by the Europe Area Committee of CIM which of the three evangelistic strategies we might use: working among existing churches, forming house churches, or establishing new clusters of churches of a denominational type? I answered that we use all three. Our newly established churches in Europe ask for a denominational identity outside of the state church. In his reply, Loewen allows for proclamatory witness within the catalytic type, when called upon. He certainly does not admit to abdicating his responsibility to the unreached, but creating friendships and trust to expedite the same. Loewen allows for the threefold approach in Europe, as long as it is meeting the felt needs of these people, not determining in advance which strategy to use, and then using that only.

Two additional theological and strategic concerns

Having read two of Loewen's recent essays I gained further background to my understanding of his major thrust. The first has to do with theology: "Which God Do Missionaries Preach?" (Loewen 1986a:3) and the second with strategy: "Missionaries: Drivers or Spare Tires?" (Loewen 1986b:253-260). Reading these has helped me see that Loewen is attempting to get us out of the "groove" he identifies at the outset. He is asking us to make a paradigmatic shift both theologically and strategically, which has a somewhat unsettling effect upon us. I wish to respond to what I perceive to be a twofold major shift which Loewen is consciously seeking to expedite.

1. **The theological issue: our notion of God.** The agenda of this consultation, and particularly the topic of strategy, does not allow a lengthy discussion of a theological/anthropological issue. But the more I reflect on Loewen's paper, the more I am convinced that he is dealing with an underlying theological issue: our notion of God. In his treatise, "Which God Do Missionaries Preach?" he makes a number of insightful observations:

- That the concept of God/gods of many third-world peoples is more similar to the one expressed in the Bible (especially the Old Testament) than is our own Western view.
- That even in Western Christendom *God* is not fully universal. Tribal, national, and denominational gods still control many situations.
- That accepting *one God* is not a once-for-all act. As cultures and circumstances change, all people are prone to develop new God substitutes.
- That we as missionaries from the West need to be a lot more critical of the shortcomings in our own God concept. We are often blindly overconfident that we are approximating the ideal in our worship of God.

In the strategy paper, Loewen is repeatedly concerned that in our communication with people of other societies, we do not shortchange God. Loewen is not opposed to "soul-winning" and "church planting." What concerns him is our sometimes simplistic, ethnocentric notions of God and salvation. Loewen's caution is against communicating a distorted notion of God.

Concerning the catalytic strategy, Loewen alerts us to two significant premises: that God and his Spirit are at work long before the missionary arrives, and that there exists the "that of God" in every person and culture. Loewen does not indicate to what extent such an image of God in humankind has salvific value.

2. **The strategy issue: our manner of communication.** Loewen's essay, "Missionaries: Drivers or Spare Tires?" clarifies for me the importance of his catalytic model, both with reference to the sending church and the missionary. Concerning the sending church, Loewen suggests the following: a) The church often has erroneous conceptions about the mission task (that is, to reproduce themselves instead of planting a gospel "seed" and letting it develop indigenously); b) it prepares its candidates for leadership roles that often are not in the indigenous church's interest; c) the sending church sees its helping role as a one-way street.

In regard to the candidates, Loewen suggests: a) In order to be useful on the field, the workers themselves will need sensitivity to discover the specific "mender-of-tires" role in which the indigenous church needs them; b) they will need an extra dose of courage to fulfill that role, especially when the latter goes against the sending church's expectations.

In the strategy paper, Loewen's catalytic model fits the "spare tire" role more so than the "driver's." Such a strategy does not approach the task with a ready-made agenda, but allows for the flexibility that Hiebert and Kasdorf call for. Unlike the self-replicating model, it does not import the church structures from abroad, but allows the local church to assume the contextualization of the gospel. Further, the catalytic approach presupposes a functioning cultural framework within which God can speak and operate, and resists importation of worship styles from abroad. Interestingly, Loewen finds such spontaneity among the Anabaptists, who refused to allow outside authorities to impose a belief system on anyone.

Implications for Mennonite Board of Missions/Services

What then are the implications for Mennonite Brethren Missions/Services?

1. **Changes at the attitudinal and structural level.**

a. Attitudinally, we must be prepared *to relinquish the control of power*, both the mission organizationally and the missionary individually. In the WCC study guide on "Ecumenical Sharing of Resources" (Potter 1984), Philip Potter maintained, "The structures of giving and receiving between the churches do not facilitate real sharing because they are caught in the vicious circle of domination and dependence." Robert Ramseyer has shown that this domination through power must be overcome at the personal level of each missionary, since Jesus carried on his mission from a position of powerlessness (Ramseyer 1984). To be a catalytic facilitator will require such relinquishing of power.

b. Further, we need *to allow for greater openness*. First, an openness at a personal level will free us from precedents and tradition, making the ambiguities and inconsistencies of such a catalytic role tolerable. In his essay on "Reason, Religion, and Decision-making in Mission" (Ramseyer 1986:301-311), Ramseyer notes that such openness enables the missionary to respond to the local situation even as Jesus in his incarnation was accessible through his proximity to the local situation. At the structural level, it may necessitate broadening our ecclesiastical comfort zone and participating in more joint projects, such as MBM/S has done in recent years with AICs in Botswana, with PIPKA in Indonesia, and with CEE in China.

c. Structurally, there will need to be *partnership at the decision-making level*. As long as non-Westerners are simply working for a Western-owned and controlled mission, they may be viewed as paid Western agents. For this reason, L. D. Pate and L. E. Keyes see the internationalization by Western agencies as not a viable option (Pate and Keyes 1986:156-161). The meeting of international Mennonite Brethren leaders in Brazil in February 1988 was a step in this direction. In "SWM's Partnership in Mission Model" (1987:458-472), Maitland Evans reports on such a successful structural change in 1977 by the Council of World Mission (CWM), the churches of the former London Missionary Society.

d. With such structural change, there will need to be a *decentralized administration*; otherwise, the catalysts will not have the freedom to minister since each society will have a unique constellation of needs and resources to meet these needs. In his report on the CWM, Bernard Thorogood recommends for the future that groupings for such sharing must not be too big, lest the participants lose intimacy and trust (Thorogood 1987: 441-451). In yet another example of such structural change in the former Paris Evangelical Missionary Society, Samuel Ada emphasizes the importance of being multicentered (Ada 1987:505-520).

e. Finally, there will actually need to be a *sharing of resources*, where, as in a true trading relationship (Loewen 1986b:253-260), each participant gives of the surplus and receives what is needed. No longer will there be the donor/recipient relationship among the international participants in mission. Like Paul in distributing the collection of the Macedonian churches for the church in Jerusalem (2 Corinthians 8 and 9), the catalysts will be sensitive to what the host society needs and can provide for others, and be instrumental in the sharing of resources.

2. **Changes at the strategy and implementational levels.** The foregoing changes of attitudes and structures will facilitate the following specific stages of implementing a catalytic strategy.

a. *Ascertain the felt needs of the target group*. Only by being present and identifying with the poor, victimized, oppressed, and suffering will the catalyst be able to "scratch where it itches," to use Loewen's aphorism. Looking to the future, H. A. Snyder and D. V. Runyon, after polling more than fifty leaders about the "Ten Major Trends Facing the Church" in the next fifty years, identify the widening gap between rich and poor among the three major world realities threatening planet earth. Recognizing this worldwide felt need must remain part of the church's agenda.

b. *Become task-oriented*. As indicated above, in their study of "Emerging Missions in a Global Church," Pate and Keyes (1986:156-161) do not see the internationalizing of Western agencies as a viable option, but recommend instead task-oriented partnerships in the area of research, strategy development, motivating pastors and leaders, and in training leaders. Such task-oriented partnership would forego the need of organizational amalgamation and would avoid indefinite resource commitments which could create dependencies. Such specific tasks would more easily be decentralized and locally controlled.

c. *Mobilize appropriate resources*. Such mobilization will occur both in the host country of the catalyst, as well as by the sending church. Frederick Wilson maintains that "the economic imbalance of this global society is such that at least through the rest of this century there will continue to be transferred from Christian communities within a context of affluence to those in a context of poverty" (Wilson 1984:237-244). However, no longer dare this be a unilateral giving, no longer a unilateral receiving. Once pooled, the participants have equal power in the distribution of those resources that belong to the one body, the church.

d. *Orient the sending church and the candidates to new expectations*. Such orientation must begin with the mission board and administrators and permeate the sending constituency in order that the erroneous conceptions about the mission task, identified by Loewen, do not occur. The sending church must no longer see its role as donor and expert, but as recipient as well, acknowledging its own needs. No longer will the prayer letters and deputation reports feature primarily the success stories to legitimate the expected support. From the outset, even before recruitment, the new role of such workers will be clear. The final, in-house orientation will simply be to fine-tune the new expectations.

e. *Enlarge the scope of ministry.* Such expansion to new areas of need, instead of perpetuating institutional dependencies which long since should have terminated, will go beyond the denominational boundaries. It will risk working together in joint projects with other confessional groups, perhaps even beyond our Anabaptist-oriented sister conferences. It will demonstrate to the world that denominations are not simply an "institutionalized manifestation of a missionless Christianity" in which they seek shelter of the like-minded, content with others believing what they want (Bosch 1987:8-15). Such expansion of ministry beyond present boundaries will admit that truth is greater than one formulation of it.

f. *Anticipate mission-in-reverse.* This notion finds considerable resistance within North American evangelicalism. Does that reflect our ethnocentrism, our confidence that we have the final answers and simply need to share these with the rest of the world? Lesslie Newbigin, following his life of ministry in India, upon his return to his native United Kingdom asks the question, "Can the West be converted?" In his recent work, *Foolishness to the Greeks* (Newbigin 1986) he argues persuasively that Western Christianity has become captive to Enlightenment rationalism and in the process abdicated its biblical roots and nature. Perhaps the church of the non-West has a mission to us in this regard. Are we willing to listen and learn from those who come to us from non-Western traditions? A catalytic strategy will call for such openness.

g. *Identify with the pilgrim church.* Becoming a catalyst will require seeking out and identifying with the believing community, however scattered, oppressed, victimized or hidden, and small it may be. One of the prognostications for mission in the future suggests increased totalitarianism, anything but a compatible environment for mission. Andrew Walls' exhortation points to the necessity of a "pilgrim" principle for such times: "Along with the indigenizing principle which makes his faith a place to feel at home, the Christian inherits the pilgrim principle, which whispers to him that he has no abiding city and warns him that to be faithful to Christ will put him out of step with his society: for that society never existed, in East and West, ancient time or modern, which could absorb the word of Christ painlessly into its system" (Bosch 1983:485-510).

The catalyst strategy proposed by Loewen is in actuality more biblically rooted, experientially tested, and missiologically sound than the first reading may have suggested. We do well, therefore, to examine our mission strategy closely in the light of such a catalytic possibility.

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Some Strategy Issues in Mennonite Brethren Mission

VICTOR ADRIAN

It is impossible to acquire and maintain a consistently relevant strategy in mission in a constantly changing world, without recapturing deep within our hearts and minds Christ's vision for the world! He manifested a profound indignation with the world as he saw it—its moral and spiritual blindness, its diseases, its deaths, its hunger—a world alienated from God's purposes. He also manifested a profound compassion for those victimized in the world—a compassion which called forth every ounce of his energy, interest, and strength as he ministered to man's needs. He expressed his single-mindedness to fulfill the Father's vision for the world in the words, "My meat and drink is to do the will of him that sent me and to accomplish his work" (John 4).

Focusing the goal of missions

Matthew tells us that when Jesus saw the crowds, he had compassion upon them, for they were harassed and helpless—as sheep without a shepherd (Matt. 9). The focus of Christ was clearly on the people of the world: their bewilderment and confusion (they were harassed); their helplessness (they were exhausted from their futile efforts and search); their lack of direction, purpose and goal, (as sheep without a shepherd). He therefore commissioned the church to go out into these crowds to call them to follow him and his vision for the world (disciple all the nations).

Jesus gave us a vision for the world and for all humanity. He came not only to redeem men and women, not only to bring kingdom peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. He came to create a new reconciled humanity—reconciled to God and to each other—and ultimately a new world unity in himself!

Paul caught this vision of Christ for the world; the attractiveness of this grand vision is summed up by John Stott in these words:

> *Nobody can emerge from a careful reading of Paul's letter to the Ephesians with a privatized gospel. For Ephesians is the gospel of the church. It sets forth God's eternal purpose to create through Jesus Christ a new society which stands out in bright relief against the somber background of the old world. For God's new society is characterized by life in the place of death, by unity and reconciliation in place of division and alienation, by the wholesome standards of righteousness in the place of the corruption of wickedness, by love and peace in the place of hatred and strife, by unremitting conflict with evil in the place of flabby compromise with it* (Stott 1979:9).

For the attainment of that divine goal, Paul suffered gladly in prison under duress, in persecution, and in stripes. Nothing, not even his own life, mattered to him if only he might finish the task given to him by the resurrected Lord: "the task of testifying to the gospel of God's grace" (Acts 20:24).

There are alternatives to this present condition which must be pursued! Spiritual and moral confusion, hunger and illiteracy, injustice and violence—these are not acceptable! Nor is indifference and apathy, or a ghetto mentality. New redemptive powers to transform men and women and reconstruct human society have broken into this world through Christ and his Spirit. There is afoot a movement in history under the lordship of Christ toward a new heaven and a new earth in which righteousness dwells (2 Pet. 3). This dynamic kingdom which will triumph must claim our total allegiance! Its powers and blessings can alone create a new society and a hope for the world. No message is more radical or liberating for the world than Christ's vision for the world. There are cries for a new order in the world. Writing from the heart of Western culture, Jacques Ellul writes:

> *Western society has given up on providing its members with a global vision, a final purpose, a direction, and it no longer has any clear sense of identity.... Our world is looking for a faith, for something that will enable it to overcome its faintness of heart, its anxiety, and the countless books on these questions no doubt reflect our situation. We have not found a belief that satisfies: we still do not have a feeling of victorious conviction* (Ellul 1983:7-8).

Evgeny Barabanov, a former colleague of Alexander Solzhenitsyn, comments from within Marxist society on the tragedy of the world in *From Under the Rubble*:

> *It is impossible for men to "settle" in the world completely without God. Although proud of its successes and attainments, the world sees every day more clearly the provisional and insufficient nature of its civilization. On the verge of having its foundations shaken to the core, it thirsts as never before for the true light* (Barabanov 1974:186).

The world, according to this Russian observer, thirsts as never before for the true light!

Not long ago I met a lawyer in Brazil who had recently received Christ into his life. He described his previous condition as one of inner lack of peace, of having an emptiness, of having a void in his heart. That condition, he maintained, is still felt by many in the economic and socially turbulent Brazil.

A few weeks ago I talked to a vibrant new Christian in Madrid. She spoke of earlier unfulfilled inner longings, and of groping for the meaning of human existence in life in the world. Again, she indicated that this condition was shared by many others in her society.

A few years ago, in the suburbs of Karachi, I was greatly stimulated by the interest of Baluchi Muslims briefly to share perspectives on Christ. Stanley J. Samartha, a Christian leader of the Church of South India, speaks of a religious resurgence in Southeast Asia, of a search for a new relationship between a view of life and a way of life.

> *Perhaps the turbulence of the times has contributed to the growth of a heightened religious sense, pushing people to search deeper for the spiritual roots of life. The rejection of institutions and the questioning of dogmas may be a product not so much of the influence of secularization as of a deepening spirituality seeking more satisfy-*

Victor Adrian is general secretary of Mennonite Brethren Missions/Services, Winnipeg, Manitoba.

ing expressions of religious life (Anderson 1983:21).

This worldwide restlessness is addressed by our Lord when he calls all to come to him (Matt. 11). It was addressed by Paul at Athens, when he acknowledged man's spiritual quest as a God-given created drive in all, and maintained that it could only find its confident assured fulfillment in Jesus Christ, the resurrected one (Acts 17).

In the light of our Lord's mission to create a new humanity in the world and in the light of God's intention with his creation, we need to state clearly and unambiguously our mission in the world today as being the following: *To glorify God by bringing the gospel of Christ to the unevangelized in the world and by ministering to the needs of mankind, to the end that all nations are being discipled into vibrant, active churches.*

The reason for strategy

A mission strategy is an all-over plan or approach devised in order to attain the church's mission. Such a strategy must include the following: a) it must be based on a search of the mind and will of God recorded in the Scriptures; b) it must be based on the guidance and power of the Holy Spirit in understanding the researched human situation; c) it must be based on an attempt to anticipate the future; d) it must be based on an international consultation process.

A clearly stated strategy statement is important for all participants in the mission of the church: for conferences and boards, for national church leaders, for the staff and missionaries. It brings a sense of direction and coherence to the entire work. It assists in an understanding and a wholesome development of partnership with participating national churches; it permits bringing the spiritual resources of prayer insight, the resources of committed missionaries, and education and material resources by all participating parties. Teamwork is effective only if common goals, objectives, and methods are accepted. Creative changes can more readily be made through discussion and consensus if there is an all-over plan. The unique contribution of participants is recognized in planned strategies.

A mission can more easily carry out a meaningful self-evaluation if it has a planned strategy at hand. Progress can be tangibly observed; morale is sustained. Supporting conferences are able to anticipate future needs in people and financial resources. Prayer becomes more pointed and specific if goals and objectives are brought to supporting constituencies (Dayton 1980:20).

It is, therefore, important that Mennonite Brethren Missions/Services have an overall strategy (goals and principles, time and place) together with long-term plans (methods and tactics) and area and country strategies (also with long-term plans). As Hans Kasdorf says, every situation and context demands a different method. It is important, therefore, to apply the principle of creativity to varying situations.

Mennonite Brethren Missions/Services is presently in the process of developing strategy for the 1990s. It is a complex, though exciting, process if one takes seriously the "covenant community" and the partnership principles. It involves seeking insights and perspectives as well as consensus with all participating parties—the home conferences, the national churches (eventually we will be speaking of international conferences and perhaps international boards; certainly international cooperation), boards, staff, and missionaries. It is a process which involves much calling on the Lord for wisdom and for illumination of the Holy Spirit.

This paper is not a presentation of Mennonite Brethren Missions/Services strategy, but an attempt to probe some aspects which constitute part of a mission strategy, in order to benefit from your counsel, suggestions, supplementations, improvements, so that we seek direction for the future together. In particular, this paper seeks to respond to the world trends and issues raised by Paul Hiebert and Hans Kasdorf and their implications for Mennonite Brethren mission in the development of future strategy.

Hiebert points out in his paper that population growth, particularly in developing countries, is an important future development which we must take into account in developing our strategy. By 2036, it is estimated that the world population will be over eight billion; seven billion of these will live in Asia. The implication of this tremendous growth, according to Hiebert, is that the mission task is greater than ever; the number who have not heard the gospel sufficiently are increasing, and we are responsible to proclaim the gospel so that all may hear and be saved. He also speaks of the continuing and expanding need of missionaries. Missionaries, he maintains, are more effective in leading people to personal commitment to Christ and in bringing them together into believers' churches than is radio or television. He also points out the tremendous need for Christian leaders among the converts of the national churches in third-world countries. He makes it a point to state that the West is rich in Christian leaders and in material resources. Therefore, it is our obligation to assist developing countries in an effective partnership.

All this suggests a greater involvement of Western churches in the future. It speaks of expanded ministries for Mennonite Brethren Missions/Services in the direction indicated in the goal statement above.

Kasdorf also underscores the fact that there are multitudes of unevangelized people and many underevangelized peoples in the world. He suggests the need for more aggressive evangelism, church planting, and ministering in all six continents, including North America.

This then is a major presupposition of a future mission strategy, namely, that until all have had an opportunity to hear the gospel, global evangelization, church planting, and ministry to the needs of the people remain highest priority for the Mennonite Brethren churches in partnership around the world. Such a priority emerges not only out of our identification with the love and compassion of our Lord and his commission to us to disciple all the nations; it emerges not only out of the tremendous needs of men and women and children in the world; it comes also out of the movement of history toward the coming of Christ. The mission of the church is an eschatological event whose task must be completed before the coming of Christ: "And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come" (Matt. 24:14, cf. Mark 13:10).

Religious pluralism, globalization, urbanization, and its implications for Mennonite Brethren mission strategy

The papers of Kasdorf and Hiebert both emphasize the continuing growth of religious pluralism and its implications for Christian mission. Because of the more rapid growth of Muslims (235 percent during the last fifty years), Hindus (170 percent growth), Buddhists (63 percent growth), contrasting with Christian growth of 47 percent in the last fifty years, we increasingly live in a religiously pluralistic world. Furthermore, recent migrations and aggressive mission methods of world religions mean that all of us, the Western world included, will face pluralism firsthand.

Hiebert and Kasdorf call for a countercultural stance which remains committed to the absolutes of Christian faith, which seeks to understand people with other than Christian religious commitments, dialogues with them in loving concern, and maintains a missionary spirit.

In addition to the above, they issue a call for a shift in mission thinking from "foreign missions" to "global mission," incorporating the West, particularly North America, in our mission strategy. Both suggest that with religious pluralism and worldwide migrations of peoples, we need to coordinate our outreach abroad with our outreach at home. In other words, we develop a global strategy which incorporates the six continents. I am proposing seven prescriptives for our strategic planning.

1. Mennonite Brethren must develop a mental and spiritual attitude of penetrating the world for Christ, with a strong confidence in the power of the gospel, the power of the Holy Spirit, and the lordship of Christ in the world today (the reality of his kingdom on earth). Incorporating North America as the sixth continent in world mission must be seen, not as a lessening of efforts to face tough world challenges, but as an encouragement toward involvement in evangelizing the unreached at home and as a strengthening of the home base (for us in North America) for world penetration.

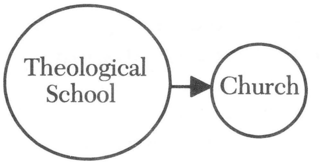
We need to counter a ghetto mentality, fearful of secularism and growing religious pluralism. The early church shows us the way. Peter suggests that we are to be prepared (suggesting an eagerness and readiness) to give an answer (apologia) to every man who asks for the reason of our hope in Christ (1 Pet. 3:15)(Dyrness 1983:17). Paul suggests that Christians are waging a spiritual warfare; they have divine power to demolish strongholds—arguments and pretentions (high towers), setting themselves against the knowledge of God, taking captive every thought in obedience to Christ (2 Cor. 10:4-5)(Bavinck 1960:222).

2. In order for the Mennonite Brethren church to achieve its goal of doubling its membership by the year 2000, Mennonite Brethren churches will need to engage at grassroots level in practical training and personal evangelism, friendship evangelism, and evangelistic Bible study groups.

3. In order for the Mennonite Brethren churches to grow in a global missions mentality, we will need to reexamine our seminaries, Bible colleges, and Bible schools in the light of the missionary mandate for the church and in the light of the changing world, its religious pluralism, globalization, and secularism. The key question is whether our schools are today training and educating men and women for Christian life and witness in the light of the trends and development anticipated for the 90s. We need to move from traditional to new patterns of education that fit the contemporary and future world developments.

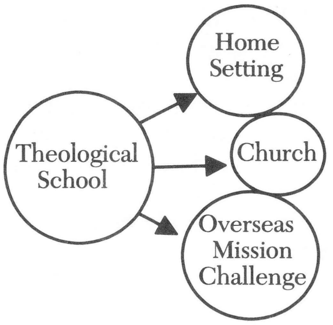
4. Important steps need to be taken toward coordinating foreign and home missions by Mennonite Brethren Missions/Services in strategizing for century 21.

1. *From* traditional patterns of education



Emphasis on:
—theology and Bible understanding
—worship
—counseling
—ministry (much internal)

2. *To* new patterns of education



witness, evangelism, church planting, and ministries in a secular pluralistic and cross-cultural world

witness, evangelism, church planting, and ministry in a cross-cultural pluralistic world

The following three steps are being processed by Mennonite Brethren Missions/Services in light of the growing awareness of the evangelistic challenge of the multicultural communities in North America, of some continuity of ministry with unevangelized countries overseas, and of the movement of some of these peoples to our homelands. Vibrant churches could not only assist in further evangelization of unevangelized peoples in North America, but could also become aids in reaching out to friends and associates in countries overseas.

a. We are cooperating with North American Conferences (United States and Canada) in developing a center to train workers for cross-cultural urban evangelism and church planting.

We have just completed our first 4 1/2-month training session in Fresno and Los Angeles under the leadership of Henry Schmidt at the Center for Training in Mission and Evangelism (CTM/E). From the beginning we had in mind developing a training center both for church planters in our needy urban communities in North America as well as for overseas ministries.

With minor variations in the program, *both needs can be met.* The CTM/E is communicating with church extension boards to share with them the merits of CTM/E for training church extension workers today. In a few years we should have as many domestic church extension workers as we have for overseas ministries.

b. We plan to cooperate with North American Conferences (Evangelism and Church Extension Committees) on a careful, selective basis in order to reach immigrant people groups in Canada and the United States whose original home countries we are unable to penetrate, or have had great difficulty in doing so.

Ultimately, creating vibrant Christian churches among such groups could provide a future movement of the gospel in their home countries through: a) their family/friends associations back home; b) their interest and prayer support in reaching their country; c) their participation with us in international mission teams.

The procedures would include a readiness to work with conference church extension committees targeting a people group, finding a suitable worker, and assisting in the funding.

c. We plan to cooperate with conference church extension committees in planning an international student outreach program.

Hundreds of thousands of foreign students come to study in North American colleges and universities. By far the majority return to their own countries to become leaders and influential people. It is easier for us to reach them here in North America than in their home countries. Returning Christian students could be an important help to us in countries we intend to penetrate in the future, or have difficulties in penetrating now.

We could cooperate in helping to develop strategies together with conference extension committees; we could provide some help in understanding students from other cultures through missionary personnel either presently active or retired; and we could help financially in assisting in providing partial support for key personnel who would engage in reaching international students for Christ. Such help could include developing awareness in congregations and assisting in the hosting of foreign students in Mennonite Brethren members' homes, etc. CTM/E could also play an important role in training for such a ministry, both through training personnel and through seminars in different regions.

5. Mennonite Brethren mission strategy will have to take more seriously the trends of urbanization and the subsequent increased marginalization of the poor if it is to be effective.

> *Jesus began his public ministry by summing up his mission as follows: The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor* (Luke 4:18-19, cf. Matt. 11:4-5).

The poor in the Bible are those who are socially oppressed, who suffer injustice, are exploited, harassed, and weighed down. At the same time, the poor are also those who recognize they are helpless and cry out to God as their deliverer. Their hopes lie in the Messiah and his kingdom.

The good news that Jesus preached to them was that he had come. In him their longing, their thirsting after righteousness would be filled. He had come to bring justice to the nations. In him they would find freedom and deliverance. In his kingdom there was hope. In a most profound sense, therefore, the poor were the poor in spirit.

Our ministries to the poor in the world need to incorporate medicine, literacy relief, and development. We need, however, to be profoundly mindful that Christ's care for the poor and the captives, the lame and the blind, went far beyond what might today be a secular Western agenda. It directed itself to the hopes of his kingdom, the hopes and blessings of his rule. The poor, said Jesus, have the gospel preached to them.

As Mennonite Brethren we need to direct ourselves in greater measure to a strategy of reaching the poor in the name of Christ. We are actively working in cities where there are many poor—e.g., Sao Paulo, Bogota, Karachi, Kinshasa. We need to come to grips with some of the problems we have in reaching the poor.

Having researched the poor in eight mega-cities, Viv Grigg makes the following practical observations.

> *The greatest mission surge in history has entirely missed the greatest migration in history, the migration of Third World rural peasants to great mega-cities.... The migrant poor are the largest, most responsive group on earth today. I have found this to be true of Muslims in Karachi, Hindus in Calcutta, Buddhists in Thailand and Catholics in Manila. All are in a state of rapid socio-economic and worldview change, and are hungry for the reality of a new relationship to a god.*
>
> *More nightmarish than the poverty and the staggering growth of that poverty, is the fact that there are no more than a handful of God's people ministering among these poor. I don't mean that there are no relief and development agencies. There are many, and most are doing good work in their defined diaconal roles. But the church has given the poor bread and kept the Bread of Life for the middle class. The search has not been for aid programs but for people who are establishing the kingdom of God, for men and women working and living among the poor to bring them the Bread of Life by both word and deed.*
>
> *There are some missions that have made a deliberate strategy to go for the rich, believing in a sort of religious "trickled down theory." "Trickled down" no more works in the kingdom than it does in the economic realm.... The gospel "trickles up." Any man or woman who would follow Jesus to walk among the poor will affect countless of the middle and rich classes.*
>
> *A missionary living on $2,800 per month in an American style house, sending his children to an American style school, trying to reach people who live on $200 per year, is like a B-52 bomber attacking guerrillas. We must send communities of men and women, married and singles, with commitments to live poor among the poor in order to preach the kingdom and establish a church in these great slum areas.*
>
> *The propensity for the American church to accept the agenda of the aid organizations as focal to the Great Commission has seriously skewed mission. Mission to the middle class is seen as proclamation, to the poor it has become giving handouts or assisting in development as defined by Christianized humanitarian perspectives* (Grigg 1988:113-17).

We are zeroing in, in greater measure, on the large city populations in order to evangelize and plant churches. We are seeking to have international teams involved in such ministry. We are seeking to explore ways in which medicine can be part of a holistic ministry as well as other ministries that are dictated by the needs of given settings. We need much help in working out a strategy as to how to reach the poor, and need to wrestle with some of the problems and issues that Viv Grigg directs to us.

6. Mission strategy in North America must include an expanded vision for mission abroad in view of the urgent needs.

Why serve abroad when there are so many needs in Canada and the United States? Is not missions a task in all six continents of the world including the Western world? Because of the tremendous decline of church membership and the repaganization of the West, there is concern about "mission in reverse." David Barrett maintains that an average of 53,000 people leave the Christian church in Europe and North America every week. In other words, the Western world is rapidly being paganized while Africa, for example, is increasing her Christian population by about 18,000 per week. In addition, refugee and immigrant movements from all parts of the world have brought unevangelized peoples into our midst. Do we not have enough of a challenge here to engage in evangelism and church planting? Can we not leave the missionary task in the third world to the established national churches?

It is true that the Bible makes no distinction between home and foreign missions; it is also true that there are many unreached peoples in North America. The world is our mission field. Winning a person to the Lord in the West is just as important as winning a person to the Lord elsewhere in the world.

The reason why we need to pursue "foreign" missions more actively is that there are far fewer resources to meet evangelistic need abroad than there are at home. In North America there are ample resources to carry out the task of evangelism and church planting. Among the three billion people who are unevangelized the resources are very meager and sometimes nonexistent. We will need to continue to encourage and to assist our international churches. We need to engage in pioneer mission, initiating evangelism and church planting in unevangelized cities and territories and among unevangelized people groups.

Mennonite Brethren mission strategy, therefore, while seeking to more effectively coordinate mission efforts abroad and mission efforts at home, and while aggressively pursuing missions abroad and missions at home, must recognize the disproportionate dearth of resources abroad (people, educational, and financial), and the disproportionate massive challenge of billions of unevangelized abroad, who have insufficient access to the gospel! If the task given to us by our Lord is to be completed, we must increase our involvements abroad as well as at home!

7. Internationalization and partnership are central to mission strategizing for century 21.

This is the day of developing partnerships in mission on an international level. Mennonite Brethren Missions/Services is exploring partnerships in regional planning (Latin America, Asia, Europe) as well as in carrying out mission assignments. We are also exploring the possibilities of global planning of our total missionary efforts abroad through a partnership of participating Mennonite Brethren churches. The spiritual resources, the personnel, and the physical resources of the international church need to be tapped to pursue our mission in the world more effectively.

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Response to "Some Strategy Issues in Mennonite Brethren Mission"

ERWIN H. REMPEL

Introduction

Victor Adrian's paper moved from the overarching consultation theme, "Global Models/Strategies for Mission in Century 21," to a more specific application within the context of the Mennonite Brethren Church. The paper "seeks to respond to the world trends and issues raised by Paul Hiebert and Hans Kasdorf and their implications for Mennonite Brethren mission in the development of future strategy." It does not interact with Jacob A. Loewen's paper, which approaches mission strategy, function, and style rather than trends and issues as in the Kasdorf and Hiebert papers. My paper discusses the "self-replicating strategy." My concern here is for evangelism resulting in personal conversion as well as for the planting of churches, vibrant and active, within the worldwide network of Mennonite Brethren churches. It seems to me that the "self-replicating strategy" at its best can incorporate the best of the "catalyst strategy" so as to yield a responsible and effective mission strategy for century 21.

Perspective of mission theology

Goal of mission

Adrian's paper makes a strong case for a clear mission goal before he gives any attention to design of strategy to reach the goal. God's glory is the ultimate goal of all mission activity. One can accomplish that goal by working at the mission task of evangelism, church planting, discipleship training, and eventually the maturing of churches.

I have found the kingdom of God to be a helpful paradigm in speaking of the goal of mission. The converted individual is not the ultimate goal of mission, nor is the gathered community of believers. Both the converted individual and the gathered community bear witness to Jesus Christ as the King who is the ultimate sign of the kingdom. Although the kingdom of God is mentioned at

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Erwin Rempel is the executive secretary for Overseas Mission, General Conference Mennonite Church, Newton, Kansas

several places in the paper it was not part of the concise statement of the mission goal.

Missions as an eschatological event

The paper supports its contention that global mission must be given the highest priority by appealing to its eschatological nature. Biblical evidence is cited (Matthew 24:14) to explain that the "mission of the church is an eschatological event whose task must be completed before the coming of Christ."

The interpretation of the Matthean text has been varied in the history of the church. The paper seems to be saying that Jesus meant that global mission is a precondition of his second coming. That is, Christ will not come back before the global mission task is complete. If this is the case then it is important to define the task that must be completed. Does this mean "hearing" the gospel only? I have some difficulty with understanding this text to be teaching global mission as a precondition of Christ's return. If completion of the task is a precondition of Christ's return we tend to view global mission as a human enterprise rather than God's.

Increasingly in mission journals and media releases one finds mission agencies setting goals for the year 2000. Some are modest but others want to complete the task by the year 2000! What does this mean? If the task is completed by the year 2000 is there no further mission of the church in the world? I hardly think so. In my opinion a more adequate understanding would be to see the mission task as for all the world and for all of time. Its completion occurs when Jesus Christ returns and is not determined by our efforts.

Perspective of mission history

Global mission in transition

At a major mission program review in September 1985 we asked Wilbert R. Shenk to speak to us about the missiological context for the next decade. One of the points he made was that the modern missionary movement had come to an end. That movement which began with Carey universalized the Christian movement. It was "attuned to the general dynamics of European culture . . . to spread its influence worldwide." Andrew F. Walls echoes this same observation in an article in the January 1987 *International Review of Mission* entitled "The Old Age of the Missionary Movement." Walls is clear that when he speaks of the old age of the missionary movement he is not speaking of the end of cross-cultural mission nor of the task of world evangelization. He categorically claims that the global mission task is never over! What he does mean is that there have been immense changes which necessitate the forging of new models of global mission for the decades ahead.

My reason for mentioning this is to suggest that while this paper reflects some creative thinking and new models of global mission there is still much that needs to be done. Mission work is in a time of transition. Spirit-directed creativity is needed to move beyond the assumptions and patterns of activity characteristic of the past.

Perspective of mission strategy

Mission to six continents

One of the major themes in Adrian's paper has to do with the mission task in North America and how Mennonite Brethren Missions/Services will respond. No doubt one of the shifts from the old mission era to the new is that mission is no longer perceived as located only outside of North America. (All three papers deal with this shift and the need to focus on mission in North America as well as around the world.)

Among the three largest Mennonite groups in North America, the Mennonite Brethren is the only one which does not have a denomination-wide program agency for implementing a home mission thrust. Perhaps this explains why the paper seems to go out of its way to show how MBM/S is responding to this increasingly important arena for mission.

Another dimension to the six-continent theme is the need for North Americans to receive as much as they give and to learn as much as they teach. Perhaps the paper made this assumption, but I did not find significant mention of the two-way nature of mission. In fact, I wondered at one point whether the only valid reason for MBM/S involvement in home mission was to enable overseas mission to be strengthened by international students returning to their home countries to bear witness to Jesus Christ.

Internationalization

I am excited at the efforts of MBM/S in terms of internationalizing their mission strategy. Early in the paper we are promised more discussion of international conferences, boards, and cooperation. I looked forward to this but found only a brief paragraph at the very end of the paper.

Both opportunity and danger are part of the challenge of internationalization of staffs, boards, and missionary strategy. The positive results of internationalizing mission programs are self-evident. One dimension of internationalization which gives me some pause is the tendency for North American-based agencies to become multinational mission agencies with headquarters in North America. Creativity must be exercised to prevent this new initiative from succumbing to the older forms of paternalism and concentrations of power.

Resources for global mission

The paper argues for a continued strong involvement of North American Christians in the global mission task, partially because of the nature of the biblical goal but also because of their relative wealth. This seems to make abundant sense. Good stewardship of resources in a world of need not only makes good sense, it is the right thing to do, as long as we recognize some dangers along the way.

The giver-receiver syndrome must change so that both are givers and both are receivers. The power syndrome whereby those with resources can manipulate those without must change so that all parties are enabled and empowered. Debilitating dependency must be avoided in all exchanges of funds. In addition to caution in the actual handling of resources, a large dose of humility is needed in assessing the value of North American resources. One of the ironies in mission history is that God has often accomplished more significant change in people's lives and more church growth without North American funds, personnel, and know-how than with these resources.

In Review

The Dragon and the Lamb. By Wayne Dehoney. Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman Press, 1988, 176 pp., $6.95 (pb)

Reviewed by Albert C. Lobe

Dehoney has visited China on three or four occasions. He describes the rebirth of Christianity in the New China: "I tell my story as a developing drama seen through the eyes of a tourist-visitor. My style is narrative and episodal rather than critical in order that the reader may not only learn about China but also experience China. I tell of a new China: her exciting cities, memorable sights, friendly people, and above all, of devoted Christian believers and dynamic churches."

The first chapter sets the stage. In chapters two through nine the author brings together brief descriptions of the geography and history of eight cities, with his own experiences and encounters. Chapter ten is warmly sympathetic to the official church and describes the relationship of the open churches and the small fellowships in homes.

Dehoney draws heavily on the earlier work of Brit Towery, *The Churches of China: Taking Root Downward, Bearing Fruit Upward.* Interestingly, he does not refer to the recent excellent book of Ralph Covell, *Confucius, Buddha and the Christ.*

Whereas it is encouraging to read such a sympathetic account of China and the Christian church, the book does have a number of shortcomings: (a) it would have been more helpful to trace one theme at a time rather than take the reader on a guided tour; (b) there is a sense of triumphalism at a number of points which is disquieting; (c) one senses the absence of a constructive critique of the modern missionary movement as it affected China; (d) the author does not adequately acknowledge the sources on which he draws.

There is yet another concern: Dehoney's work is a reminder that those denominations with earlier denominational ties to China will need to control their desire to return to those linkages and the mind-set that was part of that time. Christian churches in the West can best assist Christians in China by praying for them and by waiting for invitations to work together with them.

Albert C. Lobe, coordinator of Overseas Services for Mennonite Central Committee in Canada, has been Director of China Educational Exchange for the past seven years.

A Practical Theology of Spirituality. By Lawrence O. Richards. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1987, 248 pp., $18.95

Reviewed by Arlee Johnson

Larry Richards adds an evangelical point of view to the growing literature on the topic of spirituality. Richards seeks to help the reader come to a theological understanding of the nature of spirituality and take action that may lead to spiritual growth.

The book is divided into two parts. The first five chapters aim at defining spirituality. Particularly helpful is Richards' review of biblical terms related to spirituality. Although brief, the review is sufficiently broad to avoid the danger of stressing a doctrinaire view of the means to spiritual growth. The view of spirituality presented grows out of seeing Jesus as the model of the spiritual person.

Part Two examines seven different aspects of spirituality, such as responsibility, compassion, and doing justice alongside more traditional topics of prayer, worship, and discipleship. Each aspect is discussed in terms of personal and corporate expression. The discussion is weakened by its failure to deal with the impact of human relationships on spirituality.

This book will be useful as a text for college and seminary classes focusing on spiritual growth. There are suggested activities designed to assist the reader in self-examination and growth. Beyond the classroom, the book should prove helpful to readers interested in broadening their view of spirituality, working intensively at their own spiritual growth, or guiding others in their spiritual journey.

Arlee Johnson, a former pastor, is Director of Field Education at Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary, Fresno, California.

Religion Alive: Studies in the New Movements and Indigenous Churches in Southern Africa. Edited by G. C. Oosthuizen. Johannesburg: Hodder and Stoughton, 1986, 262 pp.

Speaking for Ourselves. Edited by Archbishop N. H. Ngada. Braamfontein, South Africa: Institute for Contextual Theology, 1985, 34 pp.

Reviewed by David A. Shank

It is a bit ironical to report on these two publications in the same review, but given their basic contradictory stances such a juxtaposition could encourage the dialogue that it calls for.

The first volume presents 25 papers read at a symposium in February 1985 sponsored by the Research Unit for the Study of New Religions and Indigenous Churches (NERMIC) of the University of Zululand. The director, Professor G. C. Oosthuizen, writes the preface and introduces the reader to the rapid growth of the "African Indigenous Churches" (AICs) in Southern Africa: 800 denominations in 1948 with 800,000 adherents, 9 percent of the black population; 3,270 denominations in 1980 with six million adherents and nearly 30 percent of the black population. The papers report the research done mostly by academics who have studied this dynamic religious phenomenon from the perspectives of their various disciplines: history, symbolism, psychology/psychiatry, healing, music, modernization, statistics, belief and practice, causation, etc.

Most of the authors are white South Africans, and among the black contributors the representation of the AICs themselves is rare. It is the case of outsider specialists looking in on a phenomenon in order to apprehend, understand, and, hopefully, dialogue better with this major religious dimension of Southern Africa. The different prisms help considerably to open up some understanding of a very complex reality and must be taken seriously by outsiders wanting to look in. At the same time the studies reveal nearly as much about Western white ways of scientific study: dissection, analysis, clarification, organization, comparison, etc. It is clearly the proverbial elephant being studied by the blind men grasping "tree trunk," "wall," "rope," "fan," "horn"—all are good images but even together they still do not give a satisfying impression. The fact that two additional symposia have since been organized by NERMIC underlines the need and wish for a fuller and more satisfying picture.

The second publication is a pilot study of the history and theology of Southern "African Independent Churches" done by a group of African church leaders under the presidency of Archbishop N. H. Ngada of the African Spiritual Churches Association, and sponsored by (then) Secretary General Frank Chikane of the Institute of Contextual Theology.

Here one hears a simple protest against the terminology "independent" and a much deeper one against the motives and conclusions of the piecemeal research done by outsiders. It particularly rejects the categories and generalizations of outsiders, based on criteria external to their own beliefs and structures. They speak of themselves as "Churches of the People" or "Churches of the Spirit" and speak of the mainline churches (in which 37 percent of South African blacks are to be found) as

"The Institutional Churches of the Whites." They refer to the "irrelevancy" of the training offered them in the 60s and 70s which followed the pattern and tradition of white churches. They write of important gaps in their histories, as perceived by outside authors. They specifically object to their histories being written without any reference to the work of the Holy Spirit who is responsible for that history. There is strong objection to Western denunciation of African customs as "heathen," with European customs considered "Christian." Then there is the recognition of their theology as "written in the hearts" rather than as a systematic exposition, a theology that has the Holy Spirit as the focal point.

Their own critique of the "white churches" is that they have left the people suffering from "spiritual hunger," thus the Spirit himself led people away from them into "true 'churches of the Spirit' founded by the Spirit." They indicate plans to promote their own research and to set up their own training programs, appropriately adapted to their needs. But the important word is that of the title: "We want to speak for ourselves and be our own interpreters."

This reviewer, also a researcher, was present at the NERMIC symposium two years later at the University of Natal. There more place was given to representatives of the Spiritual Churches. Indeed some of the richer moments in those two days came when the leaders of the Churches of the People spoke for themselves. How difficult it is for outsiders to understand the movement according to the categories of the insiders! But it does show a clear way forward.

David A. Shank and his wife, Wilma, have served with Mennonite Board of Missions in Belgium and Cote d' Ivoire since 1950.

The Baptist Heritage: Four Centuries of Baptist Witness. By H. Leon McBeth. Nashville: Broadman, 1987, 850 pp., $24.95.

Reviewed by Hans Kasdorf

In 300 words one cannot do justice to an 850-page book embracing 400 years of Baptist witness in the world. Professor McBeth deserves more than compliments for writing a church history as mission history.

The principle focus is on Baptist legacy, including such issues as doctrinal formulations and ferment (pp. 69, 155, 508, 697); discord and divisions (pp. 157, 370, 392, 571); theological education and ecclesiastical controversies. Even Walter Rauschenbusch as "Father of the Social Gospel" and pastor of "Hell's Kitchen" to feed the hungry in New York City gets fair treatment (p. 598). These issues, however, in no way eclipse the dynamics of evangelism and cross-cultural witness.

McBeth is denominationally loyal to the Baptist heritage. Yet he is ecumenical and objective in interpreting his sources, and thus not blind to the painful divisiveness within the "larger Baptist family" (p. 702). While he is distinctly Southern Baptist in orientation, his claim to be "sufficiently catholic" in spirit toward other Baptist bodies deserves notice. An example is his assessment of "Baptist fundamentalism" (p. 767f.) and the debates with the more "liberal" Northern Baptists (pp. 568-78).

While he offers a panoramic survey of many ethnic Baptist groups in the Anglophone world and gives a similar overview of Baptists in both Western and Eastern European countries, I must register two disappointments: (a) he says nothing about the movement in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and Oceania. Is there no Baptist heritage—let alone witness—on these continents?; (b) sources about Baptists in Eastern Europe are woefully inadequate. He cites Bourdeaux, Klibanov, and Sawatsky among others. But does he not have access to the writings of W. Gutsche, Kahle, Karew, Klimenko, Kupsch, Onasch, Pritzkau, and Wirth dealing with the Baptists in those lands?

The most remarkable feature of the book, in my judgment, is the author's ability to bring together extremely diverse Baptist streams, all claiming one common source, name, heritage, and witness in the world.

Hans Kasdorf is Professor of World Mission at Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary, Fresno, California. Previous assignments include teaching modern languages, and evangelism and church planting in Brazil.

Music in Missions: Discipling Through Music. By T. W. Hunt. Nashville: Broadman Press, 1987, 180 pp., $9.95 (pb)

Reviewed by Rollin Heinrichs

Hunt's book opened my eyes to the complexities and rewards that face those who are called to use music in the mission of the church. Written as a handbook for both musicians and missionaries, *Music in Missions* presents an understandable philosophy of both subjects.

Though an accepted and developed part of the church in the Western culture, music may not carry with it the same importance or function in the cross-cultural setting. Hunt seeks to define the biblical principles of music in the church, the natural characteristics and functions inherent in music, and how those functions work in various kinds of social groups, in missionary activity, and in evangelism. It is obvious that this philosophy has been developed through much study, practice, and the experience of the many missionaries cited throughout this book.

Hunt's approach is biblical, his method is that of servant leadership, and his goal is to do mission within the framework of the local culture. His treatment of culture as it relates to music performance and hymnody is the best I have read.

The main thrust of this book, however, is to show in logical and practical ways how to use music in the mission of the church. After showing the positive functions of music in mission, Hunt lists many of the dangers inherent with cross-cultural music programs, including the prejudices and barriers we create because of our own cultural preferences. He gives practical guidelines on how to avoid such pitfalls, and cautions on areas that might be overlooked by one's enthusiasm to introduce a music program (formal or informal) into a mission setting.

I found this book readable, practical, thorough, and challenging. I would recommend it to anyone who has anything to do with the music ministry of the church, locally or cross-culturally.

Rollin Heinrichs is Minister of Music/Youth at Dinuba Mennonite Brethren Church in Dinuba, California.

Mission Focus Index

Volume 16 (1988)

This index is divided into two main categories: (A) General Missions and (B) Area Studies. Each article is listed by author, title, and *Mission Focus* volume number and issue. In addition, each entry is assigned a number in italic for ease in cross-referencing. Please note that this index continues the indexes for volumes 1-10 found in the December 1982 issue; thereafter updated in the December issue of each volume of *Mission Focus*.

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Editorial

The dawning of century 21 has become the occasion for much reflection and projection regarding the mission of the church. Mennonite Brethren are no exception. The projected recruitment of 200 new missionaries by our Mission Board by 2000, the vision statement proposed by the Board of Reference and Counsel for doubling of our membership and the mission expansion among different language groups in North America, the Seminary's development of a practically oriented mission training program for preparing nonseminary graduate missionaries, and the recent International Mennonite Brethren Mission Consultation (February 1988) at Curitiba, Brazil, all illustrate a heightened preoccupation with mission theology, trends, and strategies.

The four major papers and responses to them in this issue of *Mission Focus* were prepared for a "Missiological Issues Facing the Church in Century 21" Consultation held at the Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary, January 21-23, 1988, under the sponsorship of the Center for Training in Mission/Evangelism. Eighty-five participants (missiologists, lay people, theologians, biblical scholars, anthropologists, pastors, mission executives, seminary professors, and students) worked on three primary agendas relating to global mission: spiritual warfare, future trends, and global models/strategies. Spiritual power deals with resources and one's worldview in mission. Future trends reflect not only the shaping force of cultural values but the packaging of the good news that gets a hearing. Strategies are the church's proactive response of obedience to the mission mandate.

The purpose of the consultation was threefold: 1) *To reflect on the rich heritage and 100-year tradition of Mennonite Brethren mission involvement and to ask the hard questions.* What have we learned? What have we done well? What pitfalls must be avoided in the future? 2) *To reassess the role of the Western church in global mission.* The shifting center of gravity in world mission from second world to the two-thirds world; the internationalization of mission; and redefinition of mission from geography/territory to people groups because of urbanization, war, famine, and people migrations have major implications for the Western church. In my estimation, the highest hurdle the Western church will have to jump in the next 25 years relates to internationalization and the need to understand mission as global partnership with shared responsibility, resources, and power. 3) *To reshape the direction of mission thinking, training, and strategies in view of the changing realities in both the world and the church.*

In terms of procedure the consultation was more oriented toward process than speakers; learners than instructors; and obedience than information. In that sense the gathering accomplished a primary objective of being, in Jacob Loewen's term, *a catalytic model* of the church working together in frank and open discussion on mission agenda at a critical time in our history. There was vigorous participation, discussion, agreement, and disagreement on issues of strategic implications of mission in the midst of modernity, spiritual warfare, internationalization, ministry to the poor, pluralism, and the role of women in mission. The debate did not revolve around the essence of message or task. The centrality of Jesus Christ as the good news, the alienation of humankind from God and from one another, and the acknowledgment of our need of God's resources for spiritual battle and for the task were agreed-upon assumptions. The most intense conversation revolved around developing global models and strategies of mission that are contextualized culturally, theologically, and practically without being dominated by Western models. Can the Western church make the shift to partnership in global mission without, on the one hand, losing its zeal and commitment to mission and without, on the other hand, being the primary shaper of mission strategy in century 21?

In spite of the fact that the publication of the papers and responses does not capture the process, the information is a valuable part of stimulating mission thinking and strategizing. The consultation had several obvious limitations. One was that the participants were primarily North American men. Obviously more women and more international resource people would have enhanced the meeting and added other mission perspectives. To some readers the consultation may also seem too denominationally oriented, although the resource persons represented different Mennonite groups. The rationale for publishing these papers is precisely because the issues they address move beyond denominational and interdenominational mission agendas.

I am grateful to editor Wilbert Shenk for this special publication of *Mission Focus*. The computer and editorial skills of Donna Sullivan, Mary Laurie, Joyce Warkentin and Peggy McAlister deserve special recognition. Our prayer is that the papers may help readers to think more clearly about our mission commitments and strategies so that "we may become all things to all people so that we might win some" (1 Cor. 9:19-23).

—Henry J. Schmidt

Henry J. Schmidt is associate professor of World Mission and director for the Center for Training in Mission/Evangelism at the Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary, Fresno, California.

Postmaster: Send Form 3579 to Box 370, Elkhart, IN 46515.